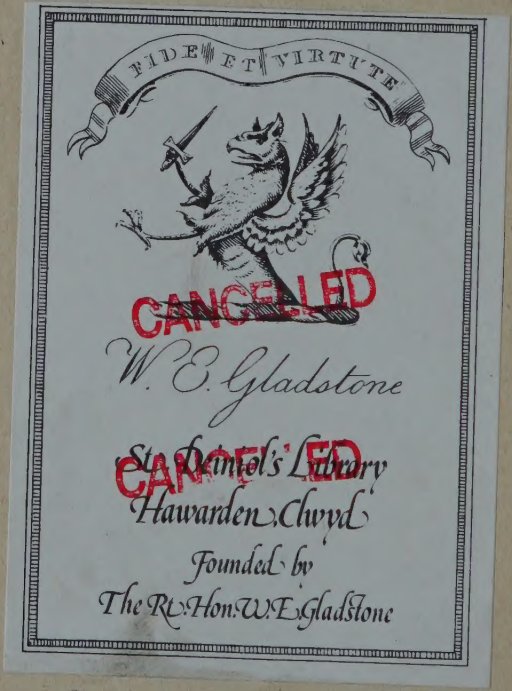
TRANSLATIONS
OF
CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

St. DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA

C. LETT FELTOE, D.D.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TRANSLATIONS OF CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

SERIES I

GREEK TEXTS

ST. DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA

TRANSLATIONS OF CHRISTIAN LITERATURE . SERIES I
GREEK TEXTS

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ST. DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA

LETTERS AND TREATISES

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By CHARLES LETT FELTOE D.D.

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PREFACE

NOT long after my edition of this Father's writings appeared in the *Cambridge Patristic Texts* (1904), I was invited to translate the Letters and some of the other more certainly genuine fragments that remain into English for the present series; but it is not until now that I have been able to accomplish the task I then undertook. Since then, though chiefly occupied in other researches, I have naturally acquired a more extensive and accurate knowledge of St. Dionysius and his times, some of the results of which will be found in this volume. Nevertheless, I was bound to incorporate a considerable amount of the information and conclusions arrived at in the former work, and wish to express my acknowledgments to the Syndics of the University Press for leave to do so, as well as to those again whose names I mentioned as having assisted me before.

In the present book Dr. A. J. Mason was kind enough to advise me over the choice of extracts from the two treatises, *On Nature* and *Refutation and Defence*, and on one or two minor points, while a friend and neighbour (the Rev. L. Patterson) read through the whole of the MS. before it went to the printer and gave me the benefit of a fresh mind upon a number of small details of style and fact, for which I sincerely thank him.

C. L. FELTOE.

Ripple by Dover
March 1918.

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INTRODUCTION

1. NONE of the many influential occupants of the see of Alexandria and of the many distinguished heads of the Catechetical School in that city seem to have been held in higher respect by the ancients than Dionysius. By common consent he is styled "the Great," while Athanasius, one of his most famous successors as Bishop, calls him "Teacher of the Church universal," and Basil (of Cæsarea) refers to him as "a person of canonical authority" (*κανονικός*). He took a prominent and important part in all the leading movements and controversies of the day, and his opinions always carried great weight, especially in Eastern Christendom. His writings are freely referred to and quoted, not only by Eusebius the historian,[1] but also by Athanasius, Basil and John of Damascus amongst others. And what we gather of his personal story from his letters and various fragments embodied in the works of others—and very little, if anything else, for certain has come down to us—undoubtedly leaves the impression that the verdict of the ancient world is correct.

HIS FAMILY AND EARLIER LIFE

2. The references to his family and early years are extremely scanty and vague. In the *Chronicon*

[1] In one of Eusebius's works (the *Præparatio Evangelica*) he is quoted side by side with great authors like Plato and Aristotle.

Orientale, p. 94, he is stated to have been a *Sabaita* and sprung from "the chiefs and nobles of that race": and several writers speak as if he had been a rhetorician before his conversion (as Cyprian of Carthage had been). The exact meaning of the term "Sabaita" above is doubtful. Strictly used, it should mean a member of the Sabaite convent near Jerusalem, and the *Chronicon* may be claiming Dionysius as that, though, of course, without any ground for the claim. If it is equivalent, however, to "Sabæan" here, it implies an Arab descent for him, which is hardly probable, as he seems always to consider himself connected by education and residence, if not by birth, with the city-folk of Alexandria, whom he distinguishes from the Coptic inhabitants of Egypt (Αἰγύπτιοι); so that it would be rather surprising to find that his family came from the remoter parts of Arabia, where the Sabæans dwelt. The other tradition of his having been a rhetorician may be due to some confusion between our Dionysius and a much later Alexandrian writer of the same name, who edited the works of the Areopagite with notes and wrote other treatises. On the other hand, Dionysius's literary style is such that it might very well have been formed by the study and practice of rhetoric, while he has been thought himself to corroborate the statement of the *Chronicon Orientale*, as to the high position of his family, in his reply to Germanus (p. 49), where he refers to the "losses of dignities" which he has suffered for the Faith.

3. He was probably a priest, and not less than thirty, when he became head of the Catechetical School in 231, and in 264 he excused himself from attendance at the Council of Antioch on the ground of age and infirmity; and so it is a safe inference that he was

born about or before 200, being thus nearly of an age with Cyprian of Carthage, and only ten or fifteen years younger than Origen, his master.

His Conversion

4. The *Chronicon Orientale* assigns the reading of St. Paul's letters as the cause of his conversion to Christianity, and proceeds to state how, after their perusal, he presented himself for baptism to Demetrius, then Bishop of Alexandria, who admitted him in due course. Whether this was actually the cause of his conversion or not, we know from what he has himself told us in his letter to Philemon (p. 56), that both before and after baptism he was a diligent student of all that was written for and against Christianity.

Was He Married or Not?

5. Whether, in accordance with the common practice of the Eastern Church at that time, Dionysius was married or not, is a moot point. He addressed his treatise περὶ Φύσεως to one Timotheus ὁ παῖς, and we read of οἱ παῖδες (of whom Timotheus was one) as accompanying him in his flight (p. 44). One would naturally infer from this that he was then a widower (his wife not being mentioned), and that these were his sons; but they may have been his pupils, on the supposition that he was still Catechete as well as Bishop, or, which is less likely, his servants.[1]

He becomes Head of the Catechetical School

6. When Demetrius died in 231, Heraclas, who for some years had been associated with Origen at the

[1] Most of those who read this will be aware that παῖς (Lat. *puer*) can be used in various senses, like our "boy" and French *garçon*.

Catechetical School and had just been left in charge of it by him on his final retirement that year from Alexandria, was elected Bishop, while Dionysius, who had himself been a pupil of Origen there, was appointed to fill the vacancy he created. It is possible that the treatise περὶ Φύσεως, extracts from which are given below (on pp. 91 ff.), was composed while Dionysius held this important post, and that a commentary on *Ecclesiastes*, some genuine fragments of which probably remain, belongs to the same period. The former of these is much the more valuable work, for in it for the first time a Christian undertook systematically to refute the atomistic theories of Epicurus and his followers.

He becomes Bishop of Alexandria

7. Sixteen years later, in 247, upon the death of Heraclas, Dionysius succeeded to the bishopric as the fourteenth occupant of the see, possibly, as has already been suggested, without at once resigning his post at the School. Philip the Arabian (of Bostra) had then been Emperor for three years, a position he was destined to retain for two years longer. Like Alexander Severus before him, he was known to favour the Christians, and Dionysius himself bears witness to the comparative mildness of his rule (p. 37). For a short time, therefore, the new Bishop and his flock were left in peace, though even before the death of Philip signs of the coming storm appeared. In the last year of his reign Dionysius tells Fabius, Bishop of Antioch (p. 35), that "the prophet and poet of evil to this city, whoever he was," stirred up the populace against the Christians in Alexandria, and several persons were

cruelly martyred. This reign of terror lasted some time, but was interrupted in the autumn of 249 by the revolution which caused the deposition and death of Philip, and which set Decius on the throne in his stead. The respite was only too brief, for by the beginning of the new year the edict which Decius had issued was being actively carried into effect. The Bishops were at first singled out for attack. Origen, though not one of them, was included among the earlier victims—on account, no doubt, of his prominence as a scholar and a teacher—being imprisoned at Tyre and cruelly tortured, though not actually martyred.

Under the Persecution of Decius

8. Decius's reversal of his predecessor's policy towards the Christians was probably due to reasons of state and expediency rather than, as Eusebius implies, to mere spite and hatred of Philip and all his ways. Anyhow, the severity of the Decian persecution is undoubted, and it fell with great force upon the Church at Alexandria. The Prefect of Egypt, Sabinus, lost no time in attacking Dionysius and his followers. Many endured tortures or death, or both. Dionysius himself, after waiting four days, fled and was sought for by a secret service messenger (*frumentarius*, see note on p. 43) sent by Sabinus. A brief search was sufficient to recover him, and he was carried off with four of his companions to Taposiris. But through a strange interposition of Providence (related on pp. 44 f.) he was rescued by a wedding party of rustic revellers and removed to a place of safety in the Libyan Desert, where he appears to have been left unmolested, with two of his four companions

(see pp. 64 ff.), till the persecution ceased and he was able to return to the city. In after days Dionysius's action in fleeing on this occasion was violently attacked by a certain Bishop Germanus, who was perhaps one of his suffragans. Germanus boasted of his own much braver conduct under persecution. Dionysius in his reply (see especially pp. 43 and 45) maintains that it was not of his own will nor yet without divine intimation that he had fled, and that he had suffered far more than his critic for the Faith. Decius's rule was brought to a calamitous end in 251, but Gallus, who succeeded him, continued his treatment of the Christians for another two years, when he, too, suffered an untimely fate.

9. For the next four years the Church of Alexandria enjoyed comparative rest and peace. In 253 Æmilianus[1] the Governor of Pannonia and Mœsia, who had in that spring wrested the imperial power from Gallus, was in his turn, after four months' rule, defeated by Valerian and his son Gallienus, and slain by the soldiery. The new Emperors (father and son) left the Christians alone during the first four years of their reign—a somewhat surprising fact, when it is considered that Valerian had been specially chosen to fill the office of "Censor," which Decius had revived. It may in some measure have been due to what Archbishop Benson (*Cyprian*, p. 457) calls his "languid temperament" as well as to his son's connexions with the Christians through his wife Cornelia Salonina.

[1] Not the Prefect of Egypt of that name mentioned by Dionysius on p. 46, though he did afterwards try to usurp the throne (see p. 16).

His Action about Heretical Baptism

10. During this interval of peace, but chiefly towards the end of it, Dionysius took part in that controversy about heretical baptism to which the letters on pp. 51 ff. belong. Up till now various parts of Christendom had followed various customs on this matter without much disputing. In Asia Minor and in Africa baptism by heretics was not recognized, while in the West baptism with water in the name of the Trinity or of Christ was held valid by whomsoever performed. Before the middle of the third century, however, the difference of practice gradually became more and more a matter of controversy. In or about A.D. 230 two synods were held one after the other at Iconium and at Synnada (see p. 58, *n.*), which confirmed the opinion that heretical baptism was invalid: and some twenty-five years later on Cyprian of Carthage convened several synods in North Africa, which arrived at the same conclusion. Thereupon a violent quarrel arose between Cyprian and Stephen the Bishop of Rome; this became, perhaps, all the keener, because of the former alliance and co-operation between Cyprian and Stephen's predecessor, Cornelius, in combating the Novatianist schism,[1] which had eventually led also to heresy over the restoration of those who had lapsed under persecution. Severe language was now used on both sides, and other leading Churchmen of the day were naturally drawn into the discussion: among them our Dionysius, who—after the first, at all events—with characteristic sagacity steered a middle course and advised that the older spirit of toleration should be

[1] For Dionysius's share in this dispute see his letter on p. 50.

maintained, the circumstances of different churches requiring different methods. Fragments of five letters on this subject have come down to us, all addressed to the Church of Rome or rather to representative members of that Church, the first of them probably written in 254 when the Novatianist schism was subsiding (see p. 52), and the others belonging to the year 257 (see pp. 54 ff.).

Under the Persecution of Valerian

11. Suddenly, in the summer of that year, the Church was startled by the issue of an edict which revived the reign of terror and threw her into a state of persecution which lasted for more than three years. This unexpected change of treatment is attributed by Dionysius to the influence of Macrianus, who at one time held the office of *Rationalis* (Treasurer or Accountant-General) to the Emperor. This man was apparently a cripple in body, but mentally and otherwise a person of considerable ability and force of character: but he seems to have associated himself in some way with the soothsayers of Egypt,[1] and to have conceived a violent hatred against the Christians. Quite early in the proceedings which were instituted against them at Alexandria in consequence of the edict, Dionysius, with several of his clergy, was brought before Æmilianus the Prefect,[2] and after examination—chiefly as to his loyalty to the Emperors, which his refusal to pay them divine honours rendered doubtful—was banished first to a

[1] Dionysius's phrase about him on p. 66 is "tutor and chief ruler of Egyptian magicians"; see note 3 *in loco*.

[2] This Æmilianus was one of several who afterwards attempted to seize the throne; see above, p. 14. Macrianus was another of them in Egypt (p. 68, *n.*).

place called Cephro (probably not far from Taposiris, where he had been sent before), and then somewhere on the high road in the district called Colluthion. Dionysius's own account of the circumstances which led to and attended this second exile is given on pp. 46 ff., an account which is valuable, among other reasons, because it is largely drawn from the official memoranda of the Prefect's court, and because it shows how both sides did their ineffectual best to understand each other's position.

Restoration of Peace

12. The persecution lasted till the autumn of 260, and was then, on the disappearance of Valerian, stayed by an edict of Peace issued by his son Gallienus, who was now left alone upon the throne. The Greek version, which Eusebius gives us, is apparently not that of the actual edict, but of the Emperor's letter or rescript which applied it to Egypt. It is addressed to Dionysius and other bishops, and runs as follows: "I have ordained that the benefit of my concession be enforced throughout the world, to the effect that men should withdraw from (*i. e.* not interfere with) your places of worship. And accordingly ye, too, may use the terms of my rescript, so that none may interfere with you. And this, which may with authority be carried out by you, has already been granted by me some time ago. And accordingly Aurelius Quirinius, who is in charge of the Exchequer,[1] shall preserve this form now given by me." Instructions were also issued permitting the Christians to have free access to their cemeteries—a privilege which was always much prized.

[1] The office indicated seems to be the same as that of *Rationalis* mentioned above on p. 16.

His Return to Alexandria

13. It is practically certain that Dionysius returned to Alexandria as soon as Gallienus's edict came into operation there. But almost immediately fresh disturbances were felt in the city, followed by one of those frequent outbreaks of pestilence to which the East was always liable, and these hindered for a time his work of bringing the brethren together again. The disturbances are with good reason thought to have been those connected with the attempt of Macrianus to overturn the power of Gallienus in Egypt, though that country was so often the scene of tumults and civil wars for the next twelve years and more that it is almost impossible to identify any particular disturbances with certainty during this period.

The Troubles Connected with his Protest against Sabellianism

14. For another five years Dionysius was spared to administer his charge and to benefit the Church at large with his prudent counsels. But, though attacks upon himself never seem to have troubled him very much, he had still to endure one such attack which probably grieved him more than all the rest, and the after results of which lingered on till the days of Athanasius and Basil in the next century. This was in connexion with the Sabellian controversy, especially that phase of it which had recently arisen in the Libyan Pentapolis (on the north-west coast of Cyrenaica). Sabellius was a native of the district, and his heresy consisted in laying too much stress on

the unity of the Godhead and in so hopelessly confounding the Three Persons in the Trinity as to imply that the Person of the Father was incarnate in Christ. It is in 257 that we first find Dionysius, in a letter to Xystus II (see p. 55), calling the attention of the Bishop of Rome to these views, by which time Sabellius was himself probably already dead. From what he says there, it appears as if Dionysius was unaware that these views were not of quite recent origin and were already rather prevalent in both East and West, whilst his words seem also to imply that this later phase of Sabellianism endangered the dignity of the Third Person as well as of the First and Second. In Libya the heresy gained such a hold upon the Church that it even infected certain of the Bishops, and the Son of God was no longer preached. Dionysius, therefore, feeling his responsibility for the churches under his care, became active in trying to eradicate the evil. Among a number of letters which he wrote on the subject, there was one (about the year 260) in which he made use of certain expressions and illustrations with regard to the Son of God, which were seized hold of by some members of the Church either at Alexandria or in the Pentapolis as heretical. This letter was apparently one of the later letters of the series, when his earlier overtures had failed to produce the effect he desired.

15. Dionysius's critics laid a formal complaint against him before his namesake (Dionysius), who had by now succeeded the martyred Xystus II as Bishop of Rome; they accused him of having fallen into five errors himself, while correcting the false views of the Sabellians.

They were as follows, as we gather them from Athan., *de sent. Dion.* :—

(1) Separating the Father and the Son.
(2) Denying the eternity of the Son.
(3) Naming the Father without the Son and the Son without the Father.
(4) Virtually rejecting the term ὁμοούσιος (of one substance) as descriptive of the Son.
(5) Speaking of the Son as a creature of the Father and using misleading illustrations of their relation to One Another.

One or two of these illustrations which were objected to will be found in the extract translated on p. 103, and they are sufficient to give some idea of the rest. It may, however, be acknowledged that neither Dionysius himself in his original statements and in his attempts to explain them, nor Athanasius, who, when Arius afterwards appealed to Dionysius in support of his opinions, put forward an elaborate defence of him, was altogether happy or successful.

16. Upon receiving the complaint mentioned, the Bishop of Rome appears to have convened a synod, which condemned the expressions complained of, and a letter was addressed by him on the modes of correcting the heresy to the Church of Alexandria. From motives of delicacy he made no actual mention of his Alexandrian brother-bishop in this letter, while criticizing his views, though he wrote to him privately asking for an explanation. A considerable portion of the public letter has been preserved for us by Athanasius, but it is not included in this volume, nor is it necessary to particularize his treatment of the question or to say more than this, that, though the Roman Bishop wrote quite good Greek and gives no impression that he felt hampered by it in expressing his meaning, yet he does naturally exhibit distinct

traces of Western modes of thought as opposed to Eastern, and is not always quite fair in his representation and interpretation of what Dionysius had said.

Dionysius's answer to his Roman brother was embodied in the treatise called *Refutation and Defence* (Ἔλεγχος καὶ Ἀπολογία), some extracts from which as given by Athanasius) will be found on pp. 101 ff.

The following is an indication of Dionysius's line of defence against the five points raised against him, other matters which arose more particularly between him and his namesake of Rome being passed over.

(1) As to the charge of separating the Three Persons in the Trinity, he distinctly denies it: all the language he employs and the very names he gives imply the opposite: "Father" must involve "Son" and "Son" "Father": "Holy Spirit" at once suggests His Source and the Channel.

(2) As to the eternity of the Son, he is equally emphatic. God was always the Father and therefore Christ was always the Son, just as, if the sun were eternal, the daylight would also be eternal.

(3) The charge of omitting the Son in speaking of the Father and vice versa is refuted by what is said under (1): the one name involves the other.

(4) Dionysius's rejection or non-employment of the term ὁμοούσιος is less easily disposed of. He practically acknowledges that, as it is not a Scriptural word, he had *not* used it, but at the same time that the figures he employed suggested a similar relationship, *e. g.* the figure of parent and child who are of one family (ὁμογενεῖς) or seed, root and plant which are of one kind (ὁμοφυῆ), and again source and stream, and in another place the word in the heart and the mind springing forth by the tongue (see p. 106): but for the unsatisfactoriness of this defence the reader

should consult Bethune-Baker, *Early History of Christian Doctrine*, chap. viii. pp. 113 ff, who points out that Dionysius had not grasped the Western tradition of one *substantia* (οὐσία) of Godhead existing in three Persons.

(5) But the most serious misunderstanding naturally arose from Dionysius speaking of the Son as ποίημα (creature), and illustrating the word by the gardener with his vine and the shipwright with his boat. His defence is that though he had undoubtedly used such rather unsuitable figures somewhat casually, he had immediately adduced several others more suitable and apposite (such as those mentioned under (4) above). And he complains that not only here, but throughout, his accusers did not take his utterances as a whole, but slashed his writings about and made what sense of them they liked, not sincerely, but with evil intent. He tries further to explain that in his context ποιεῖν (make) was equivalent to γεννᾶν (beget), as of a Father, not a Creator, which he maintains is legitimate, but the defence is not very convincing all the same.

So far as we can now judge, however, his arguments seem to have satisfied his critics at the time, and were certainly held in high repute by the ancient Churches, for they are quoted or referred to not only by Athanasius, as has been stated, but also by Eusebius, by Basil of Cæsarea (who is, however, much more temperate in his support), and by Jerome and Rufinus.

Dionysius's Last Days

17. It is evident that, in spite of this controversy, his great reputation in the eyes of the Church was maintained to the end: for when the Council of

Antioch was being summoned to deal with the troubles connected with the heresies of Paul of Samosata, who held views somewhat similar to those of Sabellius, Dionysius was specially invited to attend. As was said above on p. 10, he excused himself from attendance on the ground of old age and infirmity, but he sent a letter in reply to the invitation which contained his views on the matter, and these were unfavourable to the heretic. In 265, before the Council had finished its sessions, he passed to his well-earned rest.

Dionysius as Author

18. From what has already been said, it will be gathered that Dionysius was a person of remarkable versatility, and at the same time unusually free from those snares of the versatile man, shallowness and inaccuracy. The critical remarks on the Revelation of S. John the Divine from his treatise *On the Promises* (περὶ Ἐπαγγελιῶν), which are given in full (from Eusebius) on pp. 82 ff., have received the most respectful consideration from such authorities as Bishop Westcott and Dr. Swete and are well worth reading, while some of the expositions of Biblical passages attributed to him are probably genuine and by no means destitute of merit, though none of them are printed in this volume.

As Christian Philosopher

19. The long extracts which remain from his book *On Nature* (περὶ Φύσεως), directed against the Epicureans, show him to have possessed on the whole a clear grasp of their tenets, together with

much genuine humour and entire absence of bitterness of spirit in criticizing them.

The extracts given by Eusebius appear to be fairly continuous throughout: they deal (1) with the atomistic portion of the Epicurean philosophy, and (2) with the more strictly "theological" portion of it, the references to the hedonistic doctrine being only slight and passing.

Dionysius begins by remarking that of the various hypotheses which have been started as to the origin of the universe, one of the least satisfactory is that of Epicurus, viz. that it is the result of a chance concourse of an infinite number of atoms, as they rush through space.

He then proceeds to show by a series of illustrations taken from human workmanship that mere chance could never produce the wonderful results that we see all around us. So, too, from the study of the heavens the same inference must be drawn.

His next point appears to be that the difference in durability, which Epicurus postulates for the various bodies produced by atoms, goes to upset his theory. If some products (*e. g.* the gods) are eternal and some are short-lived, what determines the difference? Some of the senseless atoms themselves must be gifted with powers of directing, arranging and ruling. But if it is mere chance, then Epicurus asks us, who study the order and the phenomena of earth and heaven, to believe the impossible.

The same conclusion is arrived at by the study of man, whose mere body is a machine so marvellous that some have emerged from the study of it with a belief that Φύσις herself is a deity. The higher powers, too, of man, his mind and reason and skill, all point in the opposite direction to Epicurus's solution of the

problem. It cannot, surely, be the atoms rather than the Muses which are responsible for the arts and sciences.

The half-humorous allusion to these heaven-born personages of heathen mythology leads Dionysius to attack the Epicurean theory of the gods. According to Epicurus, the gods in no way concern themselves with mundane matters, but spend a serene existence without labour or exertion of any kind. But such an existence, says Dionysius, is so repugnant to the very idea and instinct of man that it must be absolutely false with regard to divine beings.

At this point occurs a short passage in which the inconsistency of Democritus, from whom Epicurus had confessedly borrowed his physics, *mutatis mutandis*, is criticized, though it has only a general bearing upon the line of argument. Democritus, he says, who professed that he would have given the world in exchange for the discovery of one good cause (*αἰτιολογία*), yet in putting forward his ideas of Chance as a cause could not have been more absurd: he sets up Τύχη as the sovereign cause of the Universe, and yet banishes her as a power from the life of men. The truth is that, while practical men and even philosophers find their highest pleasure in benefiting others, by this theory the gods are to be kept from any share in such pleasure.

One other inconsistency in the Epicurean writings Dionysius next deals with, and that is Epicurus's own constant use of oaths and adjurations, in which the names of those very beings occur whose influence upon men's affairs he so depreciates. This is, in Dionysius's opinion, due to his fear of being put to death by the state for atheism, as Socrates had been: though he is probably doing Epicurus a wrong.

The extracts end with a repetition of the appeal to the wonders of the sky and of the earth as a conclusive contradiction of Epicurus's views.[1]

A selection from these interesting portions of a not unimportant work for its time will be found on pp. 91 ff.

General Characteristics of his Writings

20. The letter to Basilides on several points of ecclesiastical order (the larger portion of which is given on pp. 76 ff.) is a model of what such episcopal utterances should be: it definitely states which is the highest and best course, but leaves the decision to the individual conscience. But it is to the general correspondence (pp. 35 ff.) that the bulk of English readers will probably turn, and that deals with a large variety of subjects: in some cases theological matters like Novatianism and the baptism of heretics are discussed; in others there are descriptions of the martyrdoms of his time at Alexandria and his own personal experiences under persecution, all told with a vividness and a sobriety eminently characteristic of the man: others are addressed to persons or districts in his province, especially at Eastertide, treating of matters of local and temporary importance, while one or two incidents which he records are of much value as illustrating church customs and manners of the period (*e. g.* the case of Sarapion on p. 42, prayers for the Emperors on p. 47, matters connected with the celebration of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion on p. 59).

[1] I was much assisted in drawing up this summary of *περὶ Φύσεως* and also in writing the notes upon the extracts from the text by Professor H. Jackson, of Cambridge fame.

In his controversy with the Sabellians, as we have already remarked, some of the expressions and figures employed were insufficiently guarded or explained and so laid Dionysius open to criticism: but we must remember how much more easy it is for us, who have the benefit of subsequent history and experience, to see this and to correct it, than it was for him and for his contemporaries to grope their way, as they slowly but surely did, under the Divine guidance to a fuller knowledge and a more accurate statement of the truth.

21. It is further to be noticed how very seldom, if ever, Dionysius offends against the principles of good taste either when attacking opponents, or when describing horrors, or when dealing with the mysteries of the Faith. In controversy he always displays an admirable moderation and sweetness of tone, which is the more remarkable because his convictions were strong and definite. This is especially to be observed in his treatment of Novatianus the intruder (see p. 50), in his criticism of the deceased Nepos of Arsenoe (see p. 82), and to a less extent in his defence of himself against the charges of Germanus (see p. 43). Even when he has to speak of one whom he believes to have done him wrong, like the Prefect Æmilianus (p. 48), or of one whom his soul abhors like Macrianus (p. 68), his language is mild in comparison with that of many in similar circumstances. So, too, when he takes upon himself to describe the tortures and deaths of the martyrs (pp. 35 ff.), or the ravages of pestilence (p. 74), he indulges in but few ghastly or revolting details, though his narrative is always lively and thrilling. And once more when he deals with such a subject as the Eternal Sonship of our Lord, or, if the passage (not here given) be authentic, His Death

and Passion, the same good taste and restraint of language is to be observed.

22. Dionysius's literary style is excellent for the age in which he lived, and so far confirms the truth of the statement that he had been a master of rhetoric before his conversion. He gives evidence of having read widely and to good purpose both in classical and in religious literature. As to the former, he actually quotes from or refers to Homer, Hesiod, Thucydides, Aristotle, and Democritus: but his language is really saturated with classical uses, and a large number of the words and phrases which he employs recall the best writers of antiquity. His compositions exhibit signs of much care in production, notably the treatise *On Nature* (περὶ Φύσεως) and the two Easter letters, to the Alexandrians and to Hierax (pp. 70 and 73). Here, and to a somewhat less degree in the letter to Hermammon (pp. 65 ff.), he writes in a more rhetorical and elaborate manner than in most of the other fragments which are extant, but even in these passages he is seldom fantastic, or stilted, or obscure; whilst in pure narrative or simple description (*e. g.* in the letters which record his own or others' sufferings and in the treatise *On the Promises* (περὶ Ἐπαγγελιῶν)), his language could hardly be more unaffected or better chosen.

Dionysius as Interpreter of Scripture

23. To what extent did Dionysius accept the principles and methods of Origen, especially in the matter of Biblical criticism and interpretation? The evidence, such as it is, is rather doubtful and conflicting. It is somewhat ominous that after the death of Bishop Demetrius, whose denunciations had caused

the master's removal from Alexandria and his retirement to Cæsarea, we hear of no effort on the part of Dionysius or of any other pupil to obtain his recall. This certainly suggests that, great as their regard and respect for him as a man and a scholar may have been, they either felt themselves powerless to reinstate him, or else considered his views and methods of advocating them detrimental to the welfare of the Church at large. On the other hand, it is pleasing to remember that Dionysius wrote an epistle to his old teacher on the subject of martyrdom, which we may presume was designed to comfort him during his imprisonment at Tyre. We learn, too, on somewhat late authority that after Origen's death Dionysius wrote a letter to Theotecnus, Bishop of Cæsarea, extolling his master's virtues. The chief methodical comments on the Bible, of the authenticity of which we may be certain, are those contained in the fragments of the treatise *On the Promises* (περὶ Ἐπαγγελιῶν), reproduced on pp. 82 ff. This was a direct reply to the *Refutation of Allegorists* (Ἔλεγχος Ἀλληγοριστῶν), in which Nepos of Arsenoe had thought to support his grossly materialistic views of the Millennium by the Revelation of S. John the Divine. As the title suggests, this work had, no doubt, attacked Origen's fondness for the allegorical interpretation of Scripture, and especially on the subject of the Millennium, and therefore we may with some amount of certainty infer that Dionysius in his refutation of Nepos would accept Origen's methods as a commentator. But the extracts preserved by Eusebius deal almost wholly with the authorship and textual criticism, and so give no proper clue as to his method of interpreting the subject-matter of the book.

In the letter to Basilides (pp. 76 ff.) the requirements

of the case do not call for a style of interpretation which would bring out either a correspondence or a disagreement with Origen's methods, except so far as it is marked by the frank and free exercise of critical judgment. The commentary on the *Beginning of Ecclesiastes*, if it is, as seems likely, in part the work of Dionysius, is not inconsistent in style of treatment with a general acceptance of his master's position. Procopius of Gaza, however, ranks him among the opponents of the allegorical school of interpreters, stating that it was in this very work that Dionysius attacked his master, and a short extract which has been assigned to it by Pitra (*Spic. Solesm.*, i, 17) is distinctly less allegorical in treatment than the rest: it runs as follows—

"On Eccles. iv. 9, 10: 'Two are better than one,' etc. As we understand this literally, we do not admit those who accept the interpretation of the statements as referring to the soul and the body; for it is by no means justified, seeing that the soul has the entire control over the ruling and governing both of itself and of the body, whereas the body is the bondman of the soul, subservient and enthralled to it in all its decisions. If, then, the soul be inclined to what is mean and evil, and become careless of better thoughts and considerations, the body is unable to restore it and lead it back to higher things: for that is not natural to it."

There is also another short extract (on Gen. ii. 8, 9 [1]) attributed to our author, which is non-allegorical in its treatment. The evidence therefore is inconclusive on this point: for though Jerome also men-

[1] The particular passage, however, adduced by Procopius above is Gen. iii. 21.

tions Dionysius as a commentator on the Bible three times in his letters, he throws no further light on the question.[1]

On the subject of Inspiration we have no ground for thinking that Dionysius took up an independent position.[2] He introduces his Biblical quotation with the phrases current amongst early Christian writers.

The general impression therefore left upon the reader is that Dionysius reverted to the more sober methods of interpreting Scripture that prevailed throughout the Church of his day as a whole, though he approached his master's theories in his usual sympathetic spirit and availed himself of much that was valuable in them.

His Place in the Church Kalendar

24. We hear of a Church dedicated to S. Denys in Alexandria at the beginning of the fourth century, which was destroyed by fire in a tumult in the time of Athanasius. October 3 and November 17 are the two most usual dates for his Commemoration in the Kalendar, the former date more especially in the East, where he is honoured as "a holy martyr." [3]

Concluding Remarks

25. The foregoing sketch is sufficient to show that, as a man of action and a ruler of the Church, Dionysius's

[1] On this point C. H. Turner's article in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. V, pp. 496 f. (on Patristic Commentaries), may be consulted.

[2] The passage on Luke xxii, quoted by Dr. Sanday (*Inspiration*, p. 36), is of very doubtful authenticity.

[3] "Martyr" in this case need not necessarily be taken strictly as meaning "one put to death for the Faith," though no doubt the mediæval tradition was in favour of his martyrdom in that sense.

personality is no less striking than as a student, a writer and a thinker. He was clearly a strong yet conciliatory administrator of his province as Bishop of Alexandria, just as he had been a competent and successful teacher and director of sacred studies as head of the Catechetical Schools—one who in each capacity carried on and maintained the great traditions which he inherited from S. Mark and his successors, from Pantænus, Clement and Origen. And not only at home and within his own jurisdiction, as we have seen, did he worthily "magnify his office" and "make full proof of his ministry"; for he made his influence for good felt throughout Christendom. Bishops and clergy from all parts naturally turned to him in their difficulties for advice and guidance; and it is impossible not to feel that his wonderful breadth of judgment and his love of conciliation were of the greatest value to the Church of the third century, and will remain a model for imitation to each succeeding age. Men will always be tempted, as they were in that century, to speak strongly and to act vehemently where their spiritual beliefs are involved, and we may pray that God will never fail to raise up amongst the rulers of His Church men of the type of S. Denys the Great of Alexandria.

Bibliography

26. The first attempt at making a full collection of our author's remains was undertaken by Simon de Magistris, whose edition was published at Rome in 1796. Routh (*Reliquiæ Sacræ*, tom. iii. and iv.; Oxford, 1846) and Migne (*Patr. Græc.* tom. x.) published considerable portions with Latin notes, while Gallandius (*Bibliothcca vett. patrum*, app. to vol. xiv.),

Pitra, Mai and (more recently) Holl in vol. v. of *Texte und Untersuchungen* (*neue Folge*) have printed a number of fragments from various sources and of very varying degrees of probable authenticity.

The earliest list of Dionysius's literary productions, except the scattered references to be found in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius, is that of Jerome (*de viris illustribus*, 69), which more or less tallies with what we gather from Eusebius. The student will, however, find a complete modern list of them, together with other valuable matter, in Harnack, *Altchrist. Lit.*, vol. i. pp. 409–27, and in Bardenhewer, *Altkirch. Lit.*, vol. ii. pp. 167–91: the account in Krüger, *Early Christian Literature* (Eng. Trans.) is much shorter. Several compositions mentioned by Eusebius and Jerome are only known to us by name, unless some of the short extracts attributed to Dionysius come from one or other of them, and the contents of them are almost wholly matter for conjecture. The most important of these is perhaps the ἐπιστολὴ διακονικὴ διὰ Ἱππολύτου (Eus., *H.E.* vi. 45), because of the various theories which have been put forward about it. Dom Morin (*Revue Bénédictine*, xvii., 1900), for instance, suggested that Rufinus's translation of the doubtful epithet (διακονική) being *de ministeriis*, it was none other than the *Canons of Hippolytus*, and that the Canons were afterwards attributed to the church-writer, Hippolytus, through a mistaken identification of the unknown bearer of Dionysius's missive with the well-known author; but the theory has not met with much acceptance since, and the discussion has of late died down, quite different views being now held about the Canons of Hippolytus.

It may also be mentioned that several fragments in Syriac and in Armenian are attributed to Dionysius,

but only three of these, in the former language, appear to be genuine: one is a translation of the letter to Novatian (p. 50), and the two others are, whether rightly or wrongly, thought to be part of the Letter to Stephanus on Baptism, and will be found as §§ 2 and 3 of it on pp. 53 ff.

The article on Dionysius in Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Biography* is by Dr. Westcott, and, though not very full, is, it is needless to say, worthy of being consulted.

Three German books on our author will also be found useful, though not very recent: viz. Förster, *de doctrin. et sententiis Dionysii*, Berolini, 1865; Dittrich, *Dionysius der Grosse*, Freiburg, 1 B, 1867; and Roch, *Dionysius der Grosse über die Natur*, Leipzig, 1882. Of these the second is the most important for the general student.

Dr. Salmond produced a serviceable translation of the fragments in 1871 (T. & T. Clark's series, Edinburgh), and since then we have had Dr. Gifford's (in his scholarly edition of Eus., *Præpar. Evang.*, Oxford, 1903), of such as there appear.

For the general history of the period much valuable help will be found in Archbishop Benson's *Cyprian*, London, 1897; P. Allard, *Histoire des Persécutions*, vols. ii. and iii., Paris, 1886, and Aubé, *L'Eglise et l'Etat dans la 2de moitié du 3me Siècle.*

A full collection of all the genuine and doubtful extracts appeared in the series of *Cambridge Patristic Texts*, with introductions and notes by the present editor, in 1904.

LETTERS

To Fabian, Bishop of Antioch

(Eus., *H. E.* vi, 41, 42, and 44)

(1) The persecution did not begin amongst us with the Imperial edict; for it anticipated that by a whole year. And the prophet and poet of evil to this city, whoever he was,[1] was beforehand in moving and exciting the heathen crowds against us, rekindling their zeal for the national superstitions. So they being aroused by him and availing themselves of all lawful authority for their unholy doings, conceived that the only piety, the proper worship of their gods was this—to thirst for our blood. First, then, they carried off an old man, Metras, and bade him utter impious words,[2] and when he refused they beat his body with sticks and stabbed his face and eyes with sharp bulrushes as they led him into the outskirts of the city and there stoned him. Then they led a believer named Quinta to the idol-house and tried to make her kneel down, and, when she turned away in disgust, they bound her by the feet and hauled her right through the city over the rough pavement, the big stones bruising her poor body, and at the same time beat her till they reached the same spot, and there stoned her. Thereupon they all with one

[1] It looks as if Dionysius was afraid to mention his name. Perhaps it was Sabinus the Prefect. The word "poet" in Greek means properly "maker," and there is evidently a *double entendre* in its use here.

[2] *i. e.* against Christ (1 Cor. xii. 3).

consent made a rush on the houses of the believers, and, falling each upon those whom they recognized as neighbours, plundered, harried and despoiled them, setting aside the more valuable of their possessions and casting out into the streets and burning the cheaper things and such as were made of wood, till they produced the appearance of a city devastated by the enemy. But the brethren gave way and submitted and accepted the plundering of their possessions with joy like unto those of whom Paul also testified.[1] And I know not if any, save possibly a single one who fell into their hands, up till now has denied the Lord.

Another notable case was that of the aged virgin Apollonia, whom they seized and knocked out all her teeth, striking her on the jaws: then they made a pyre before the city and threatened to burn her alive, if she would not join them in uttering blasphemies. But she asked for a brief respite, and being let go, suddenly leapt into the fire and was devoured by the flames. Sarapion, also, they caught in his own house, and after outraging him with cruel tortures and crushing all his limbs, they cast him headlong from the upper storey.

And we could go by no high road, thoroughfare, or byway, either by day or by night; for everywhere and always there was a constant cry that any one who did not utter words of blasphemy must be dragged off and burnt.

And this state of things prevailed for some time, till the revolution and civil war [2] occupied the atten-

[1] The reference is to Heb. x. 34. It will be noticed that Dionysius attributes this Epistle to S. Paul, either inadvertently or in accordance with the Alexandrine tradition, which Origen also accepts (Eus., *H. E.*, vi. 25).

[2] Viz. the revolt of Decius in Oct. 249.

tion of these unhappy men and turned on one another their fury against us. And so we had a short breathing space, as they found no leisure for raging against us: but very soon the overthrow of the ruler who had been not unfavourable to us [1] is announced, and our grave fears of being attacked are renewed. And, in fact, the edict arrived, which was itself almost to be compared with that foretold by the Lord, well-nigh the most terrible of all, so as to cause, if possible, even the elect to stumble.[2] Nevertheless all were panic-stricken, and numbers at once of those who were in higher positions, some came forward in fear, and some who held public posts were led by their official duties; others, again, were brought in by those about them, and when their names were called, approached the impure and unholy sacrifices; pale and trembling in some cases as if they were not going to sacrifice but themselves become sacrifices and victims to the idols, so that they incurred ridicule from the large crowd that stood by, and proved themselves to be utter cowards both in regard to death and in regard to sacrificing, whilst others ran readily up to the altar, making it plain by their forwardness that they had not been Christians even before. About such the Lord's prediction is most true that with difficulty shall they be saved.[3] And of the rest [4] some followed one or other of the above, while others fled or were captured: and of these last, again, some after going

[1] *i. e.* Philip the Arabian, who was popularly supposed to be half a Christian.

[2] The reference is obviously to Matt. xxiv. 24 (Mark xiii. 22) though Dionysius has substituted "cause to stumble" (σκανδαλίσαι) for "cause to go astray" (πλανῆσαι or ἀποπλανᾶν).

[3] The reference is very loosely to Matt. xix. 23 and 25.

[4] Viz. those who held no prominent position; the ordinary folk.

as far as chains and imprisonment, and even after being immured several days in certain cases, still, before coming into court, forswore themselves; and others, even after enduring some amount of torment, failed at the last. But the steadfast and blessed pillars of the Lord,[1] being strengthened by Him and receiving due and proportionate power and endurance for the mighty Faith that was in them, proved themselves admirable witnesses of His Kingdom.[2] Foremost among them was Julian, a sufferer from gout, unable to stand or walk; he was brought up with two others, who carried him, of whom the one straightway denied the Faith; the other, Cronion by name, but surnamed Eunous (well-disposed), and the old man Julian himself confessed the Lord and were conveyed on camel's back, and scourged as they rode right through the city—big though it be, as ye know—and at last were burnt with fire unquenchable, whilst all the people stood round. And a soldier who stood by as they were carried along and protested against those who insulted them was denounced and brought up, to wit God's brave warrior Besas, and after heroic conduct in the great war of piety was beheaded. And yet another, a Libyan by race, who rightly and happily was named Mauar (happy),[3] though the judge urged him strongly to renounce the Faith, would not give in, and so was burnt alive. After them Epimachus and Alexander, when they had remained a long time in bonds and had endured endless tortures from the "claws"[4] and scourges, were also consumed

[1] Cp. Gal. ii. 9.

[2] Cp. Acts xxviii. 23 and Rev. i. 9.

[3] There is evidently an allusion here to Matt. v. 11 and Luke vi. 22.

[4] Viz. the *ungulæ*, with which the flesh was torn from the bones.

with fire unquenchable. And with them four[1] women: Ammonarion, a holy virgin, though the judge tortured her vigorously for a long time because she had declared beforehand that she would say nothing that he bade her, kept true to her promise and was led off to punishment; and of the rest there was the aged and reverend Mercuria and Dionysia, who, though she had many children, did not love them above the Lord: these the Prefect was ashamed to go on torturing in vain and be beaten by women, and so they died by the sword without further tortures: for the brave Ammonarion had exhausted all their devices.

Then were delivered up three Egyptians: Heron, Ater and Isidore, and with them Dioscorus, a lad of about fifteen. And first of all the Prefect tried to cajole the stripling with words, thinking he could easily be won over, and then to force him by torments, thinking he would soon give in, but Dioscorus was neither persuaded nor forced. So the others he cruelly lacerated, and when they, too, stood firm, handed them over to the fire; but Dioscorus, who had distinguished himself in public and had answered his private questionings most wisely, he let off, saying that he granted him a reprieve for repenting, on account of his age. And now[2] the godly Dioscorus is still with us, having waited for his longer trial and his more determined conflict.

Another Egyptian, Nemesion, was falsely accused of being an associate of brigands, but being accused of that most untrue charge before the centurion, he was then denounced as a Christian and came in

[1] Only three are mentioned in the text.

[2] *i. e.* some time between 251, when persecution ended with the death of Decius, and 257, when Valerian revived it.

chains before the Prefect.[1] And he having most unjustly maltreated him with twice as many tortures and stripes as the brigands had received, burnt him to death between them, being honoured, happy man, by the example of Christ.[2]

Again a whole quaternion of soldiers—Ammon, Zenon, Ptolemy and Ingenuus, and an old man, Theophilus, with them, were standing before the judgment seat, whilst some one was being tried for being a Christian, and when he showed signs of denying the Faith they were so provoked as they stood by, nodding their heads, and stretching out their hands and making gestures with their bodies, that they drew the general attention to themselves, and then, before any could seize them, they leapt upon the stand[3] of their own accord, saying they were Christians, so that the Prefect and his assessors were frightened, and those who were being judged seemed to take courage over what awaited them, and their judges lost heart. So these soldiers walked in brave procession from the court and rejoiced in their witness (martyrdom), God giving them a glorious triumph.[4]

(2) And many others in the cities and villages were torn asunder by the heathen (Gentiles), one of which I will mention as an example. Ischyrion acted as steward to one of the authorities at a wage. His employer bade him sacrifice, ill-treated him when he refused, and on his persistence drove him forth with insults: when he still stood his ground, he took

[1] The first was a martial offence, the second a civil.
[2] *i. e.* by being allowed to follow Christ's example.
[3] This was the *catasta*, or platform, which corresponded to our prisoner's dock.
[4] Dionysius's language recalls 2 Cor. ii. 14; Col. ii. 15 is different.

a big stick and killed him by driving it through his vital parts. What need to mention the multitude of those who wandered in deserts and mountains [1] consumed by hunger and thirst and cold and diseases and brigands and wild beasts? the survivors of whom bear witness to their election and victory.[2] Of these, also, I will bring forward one instance by way of illustration. Chæremon was the aged Bishop of what is called Nilopolis. He fled to the Arabian hills [3] with his wife [4] and never returned, nor were they ever seen again by the brethren, who made long search, but found neither them nor their bodies. And there were many who on those very Arabian hills were sold into slavery by the barbarian Saracens,[5] of whom some were with difficulty ransomed at high sums, and others even yet have not been ransomed. And these things I have described at length, brother, not without purpose, but in order that thou mightest know how many terrible things have taken place amongst us, of which those who have had more experience will know of more cases than I do.

Then shortly after he proceeds—

(3) Accordingly, the holy martyrs themselves, when still amongst us, who are now the assessors of Christ and partners of His Kingdom, sharing His judgments and decisions,[6] espoused the cause of

[1] Cf. Heb. xi. 38.

[2] *i. e.* they showed themselves worthy of being among the elect.

[3] A range of hills to the east of the Nile seems to have been so called.

[4] On the marriage of the clergy at this time, see Bingham, *Antiq.*, IV, v. § 5.

[5] This is probably the earliest extant mention of the Saracens—at least by that name.

[6] The opinion that the martyrs passed at once to heaven and shared His throne was general among the early Fathers (see Matt. xix. 28 and 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3).

certain of the fallen brethren who had incurred the charge of having done sacrifice, and seeing their conversion and repentance and approving it as fit to be accepted by Him who desireth not at all the death of the sinner so much as his repentance,[1] received them, summoned them to assemblies, introduced them and admitted them to the prayers and feasts.[2] What, then, do ye counsel us in these matters, brethren? What ought we to do? Shall we acquiesce and assent to them and maintain their decision and concession and treat kindly those to whom they have extended mercy? or shall we hold their judgment wrong and set ourselves up as critics of their decision and vex their kind hearts and reverse their arrangement?

[A further extract on the subject of the lapsed]

I will set out the following single example that happened amongst us. There was a certain aged believer amongst us, Sarapion, who had lived blamelessly for a long time but yielded to temptation. This man often begged to be restored, but no one heeded him; for he had sacrificed. But he fell ill, and for three days in succession he remained speechless and unconscious. Then recovering a little on the fourth day, he called to him his nephew and said: "How long, my child, do ye keep me back? hasten ye, I pray, and let me go speedily. Call thou one of the elders (presbyters)." After this he became speechless again. The boy ran for the elder, but it was night and he was ill and could not come. Now I had given instructions that if those who were

[1] Cp. Ezek. xviii. 23, xxxiii. 11, 2 Pet. iii. 9.

[2] These expressions are not to be pressed as if they assumed episcopal authority.

departing life asked and especially when they chanced to have made supplication even before, they should be absolved in order that they might depart in good hope; he gave the boy, therefore, a morsel of the Eucharist, bidding him moisten it and drop it into the old man's mouth. The lad went back with it. When he drew near, before he entered, Sarapion revived again and said: "Hast come, child? The presbyter could not come, but do thou quickly what he bade thee, and let me go." So the boy moistened it and dropped it into his mouth: and the other shortly after swallowing it straightway gave up the ghost. Was he not clearly sustained and kept alive until he was absolved that, with his sin wiped out, he might be acknowledged (by the Lord) for the many good things he had done?

To Germanus a Bishop

(Eus., *H. E.* vi. 40 and vii. 11)

(1) Now before God I speak and He knoweth if I lie;[1] not at all on my own judgment nor yet without Divine guidance did I take flight, but on a former occasion also as soon as ever the persecution under Decius was set up,[2] Sabinus[3] sent a *frumentarius*[4] to seek me; and I awaited his arrival at my house for four days, while he went round searching everywhere, the streams, the roads and the fields, where he suspected me to hide or go, but he never lighted on my house, being held by blindness: for he did not believe

[1] Cp. Gal. i. 20.
[2] *i. e.* in October 249.
[3] The Prefect of Egypt.
[4] This was a kind of soldier employed on secret service by the emperors and their provincial governors.

I should stay at home under pursuit. And hardly after the four days when God bade me remove and unexpectedly made a way for me, I and the boys [1] and many of the brethren went out together. And this was ordered by the Providence of God, as after events have shown, in which perchance we have been useful to some.

Further on he proceeds—

(2) For about sunset I with my companions having fallen into the hands of the soldiers, was taken to Taposiris, but Timotheus [2] by the Providence of God happened not to be present nor to be caught elsewhere. But arriving afterwards, he found the house empty and servants guarding it, and us carried off prisoners.

And further on—

(3) And what is the manner of His wonderful dispensation? for only the truth shall be spoken. One of the rustics met Timotheus as he was fleeing and troubled,[3] and inquired the reason of his haste. And he told the truth, and when the other heard it (now he was going to a marriage revel: for it is their custom to pass the whole night at such gatherings), he entered and informed those who were reclining at table. And they with one consent as if at a signal all arose and came running at great speed and fell upon us with loud cries, and when the soldiers who were guarding us straightway took to flight, they

[1] Probably his sons though they might be his pupils or his servants.

[2] One of "the boys."

[3] Whether Timotheus was making off to join Dionysius or was fleeing in another direction is not clear.

came upon us just as we were reclining on the bare bedsteads. And I indeed, God wot, taking them at first to be bandits who had come for plunder and ravage, remained on the couch where I was, undressed save for my linen under-garment,[1] and began to offer them the rest of my raiment which was at my side. But they bade me rise and go out as quickly as I could. And then I, understanding why they had come, cried out begging and praying them to depart and leave us, and if they would do us a good turn, I besought them to forestall those who had carried me off and cut off my head themselves. And while I thus cried, as they know who shared and took part in everything, they raised me by force, and when I let myself down on my back to the ground, they took and led me out, dragging me by the arms and legs. And there followed me those who had been witnesses of all this, Gaius, Faustus, Peter and Paul, and they also helped to carry me out of the township in their arms, and then putting me on a barebacked ass, led me away.

[Another extract from the same letter given by Eusebius in another part of his History, and referring to a somewhat later period in Dionysius's life]

(4) I am really in danger of falling into much foolishness [2] and want of right feeling through being compelled of necessity to narrate God's wondrous dispensation concerning us. But since "it is good," it says,[3] "to keep close the secret of a king but

[1] Cp. Mark xiv. 52.

[2] Dionysius's language here recalls 2 Cor. xi. 1, 17, 21 and xii. 6, 11.

[3] Viz. Tobit xii. 7, where the best attested reading is "to reveal gloriously," instead of "(it is) glorious to reveal."

glorious to reveal the works of God," I will come to close quarters with our violent accuser, Germanus. I came before Æmilian [1] not alone; for there followed with me my fellow-presbyter [2] Maximus, and deacons Faustus, Eusebius and Chæremon. And one of the brethren who was present from Rome came in with us. Now Æmilian did not say to me at the start, "Do not summon" (the brethren for public worship): for that was superfluous and the last thing (to insist on), since he was going back to the very beginning of the matter. For the question was not about summoning others but about not being Christians ourselves, and it was from this that he bade us desist, thinking that if I should change my mind, the others would follow me. And I answered not unsuitably nor yet very differently from the words: "We ought to obey God rather than men," [3] but I testified outright that I worship the only God and none other, nor will I ever alter nor desist from being a Christian. Upon this he bade us go away to a village on the borders of the desert named Cephro. Listen then to what was said on both sides as it was (officially) recorded: Dionysius, Faustus, Maximus, Marcellus [4] and Chæremon being brought in, Æmilian the Prefect said: "In the course of conversation also [5] I described to you the clemency which our Sovereigns [6] have displayed towards you. For they gave you

[1] The Prefect of Egypt at that time.

[2] Though Dionysius was Bishop, it is noticeable that he still associates himself with the presbyterate here and elsewhere; cp. 1 Pet. v. 1, etc.

[3] Acts v. 29.

[4] Marcellus seems to be the "brother from Rome" mentioned above, and Eusebius is not now mentioned.

[5] The word "also" either refers to the imperial edict or suggests that some written communication had been sent.

[6] Viz. Valerian and his son Gallienus.

opportunity of being liberated if you would adopt a natural line of conduct and worship the gods who protect the Empire and give up those who are contrary to nature. What say ye then to this? for I do not expect you will be ungrateful for their clemency when they invite you to a better course." Dionysius answered: "It is not a fact that all men worship all gods, for each worships certain whom he believes in. So with us, we worship and adore the One God, the Creator of all things, who has entrusted the Empire also to the most religious Emperors, Valerian and Gallienus; and to Him we pray[1] without ceasing for their Empire that it may abide unshaken." Æmilian the Prefect said, "But who prevents you from worshipping him also, if he be god, with the natural gods? for you were ordered to worship gods and those which all know." Dionysius answered: "We worship none other but Him." Æmilian the Prefect said to them: "I observe that you together are both ungrateful and insensible of the leniency of our Emperors. Wherefore ye shall not be in this city but shall be dismissed to the parts of Libya and stay in a place called Cephro, which I have chosen at the bidding of our Emperors. And both you and others will be absolutely forbidden either to hold meetings or to enter the cemeteries so-called.[2] And if any one were to appear not to have arrived at the place I have ordered or were found at any assembly, he will do so at his own risk. For the necessary penalty will not be wanting. Be off therefore where

[1] Cp. 1 Tim. ii. 2; this laudable custom is often referred to in early Christian writings.

[2] This restriction was constantly enforced by persecuting emperors, because the graves of martyrs were a favourite resort for prayer and worship. The word cemetery (= sleeping-place) was introduced by Christians for graveyards.

ye were bidden." So he hurried me away even though I was sick, granting me not a day's respite. What leisure, then, had I to call assemblies or not? [1]

Further on he says—

(5) But we did not abstain even from the visible assembling of ourselves together in the Lord's presence, but those who were in the city (Alexandria) I the more earnestly urged to assemble, as if I were still with them, being absent in the body, as it says, but present in the spirit.[2] And at Cephro also a large number of the Church were sojourning with us, consisting of the brethren who had followed us from the city or were present from other parts of Egypt. There, too, the Lord opened us a door for the word.[3] And at first we were pursued and stoned, but later not a few of the Gentiles left their idols and turned to God. Thus the word was first sown through us in their hearts who had not previously received it. And as it were for this cause God having led us to them, led us away again when we had fulfilled this ministry.[4] For Æmilian wished, as it seemed, to transfer us to rougher and more Libyan-like parts, and bade those who were scattered in every direction to draw together to the Mareotis, assigning to each party one of the villages of the district, but us he put more on the road so that we should be the first to be arrested. For he evidently managed and arranged so that he might have us easy of capture whenever he wished to seize us. And as for me, when I was ordered to depart to Cephro, I did not even know in what direction the place lay, hardly having heard

[1] This is an indignant protest against Germanus's charges.
[2] 1 Cor. xv. 3. [3] Col. iv. 3. [4] Cp. Acts xii. 25.

so much as the name before; and yet I went off willingly and without trouble. But when it was told me that they would remove me to the parts of Colluthion, all who were present know how I was affected. For here I will accuse myself. At first I was vexed and took it very ill. For though the place happened to be better known and more familiar to us, yet people said it was devoid of brethren and respectable folk, being exposed to the annoyances of wayfarers and the attacks of robbers. But I found consolation when the brethren reminded me that it is nearer to the city, and that, while Cephro gave much opportunity of intercourse with brethren from Egypt in general, so that one could draw congregations from a wider area, yet at Colluthion we should more constantly enjoy the sight of those who were really loved and most intimate and dear. For they would be able to come and stay the night and there would be district-meetings as is the case with outlying suburbs.[1] And so it turned out.

And lower down again he writes this about what had happened to him—

(6) Many indeed are the confessions of faith over which Germanus prides himself: many are the things which he has to mention as having happened to him. Can he reckon up as many in his own case as I can in mine—condemnations, confiscations, sales by public auction, spoiling of one's possessions, loss of dignities, despisings of worldly honour, contempt of commendations by Prefects and Councils and of opponents' threats, endurance of clamourings and dangers and

[1] The brethren who lived on the outskirts of a city like Alexandria were not bound to attend the mother church, but had as it were chapels of ease in their own vicinities.

persecutions and wanderings and tribulations and much affliction, such as are the things which have happened unto me under Decius and Sabinus and up to the present time under Æmilian? But where did Germanus appear? What talk was there of him? However, I withdraw from the much foolishness into which I am falling through Germanus; wherefore I refrain from giving a detailed account of events to the brethren who know all.

(To Novatian)

(Eus., *H. E.* vi. 45)

If it was against thy will, as thou sayest, that thou wast promoted,[1] thou wilt prove this by retiring of thine own accord. It were good to suffer anything and everything so to escape dividing the Church of God. And martyrdom[2] to avoid schism is no less glorious than martyrdom to avoid idolatry. Nay, it is to my mind greater. In one case a man is a martyr for his own single soul's sake. But this is for the whole Church. Even now wast thou to persuade or constrain the brethren to come to one mind, thy true deed[3] were greater than thy fall. This will not be reckoned to thee, the other will be lauded. And if thou shouldest be powerless to sway disobedient spirits, save, save thine own soul.[4] I pray for thy health and thy steadfast cleaving to peace in the Lord.

[1] Or perhaps "carried on" (to act as thou didst).

[2] Strictly speaking, Novatian's withdrawal was not very likely to involve actual martyrdom.

[3] The word is *κατόρθωμα* (success); perhaps "recovery" would bring out the antithesis to "fall" (*σφάλμα*) better.

[4] Gen. xix. 17 (LXX).

[I have to thank the editors and publishers for leave to reprint the above translation by Archbishop Benson from his *Cyprian*, p. 142.]

To Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, in Reply to a Letter from him about Novatian (circ. 253)

Eusebius (*H. E.* vi. 46) quotes only one short sentence from Dionysius's letter, which refers to the death of Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem, one of Origen's distinguished pupils and supporters. Alexander twice boldly confessed Christ in the Governor's Court at Cæsarea and died at last in prison. The sentence is as follows—

"The admirable [1] Alexander entered into a blessed rest whilst in custody."

According to Eusebius, the letter also mentioned the invitation which Dionysius had received from the Bishops of Asia Minor to attend a synod at Antioch at which "they tried to suppress the schism of Novatian."

To Stephanus, Bishop of Rome

(Eus., *H. E.* vii. 4 and 5)

(*The First of the Epistles about Baptism*)

(1) Know now, brother, that all the Churches in the East and even further afield [2] which were divided, have been united: and all their rulers everywhere

[1] Another reading gives "blessed" (*μακάριος*), which, though less well supported by the MSS., makes the phrase *μακαρίως ἀνεπαύσατο* more pointed.

[2] This expression probably means to include the Churches of Mesopotamia and Osroene, besides those which he proceeds to mention below.

are of one mind, rejoicing exceedingly at the unexpected peace[1] which has come about, Demetrian in Antioch, Theoctistus in Cæsarea, Mazabbanes in Ælia,[2] Marinus in Tyre, Alexander having fallen asleep, Heliodorus in Laodicea, Thelymidrus being at rest, Helenus in Tarsus and all the Churches of Cilicia, Firmilianus[3] and all Cappadocia. For I have mentioned only the more prominent of the Bishops, in order that I may not make my letter too long nor my narrative wearisome. Nevertheless, the whole of Syria and Arabia, districts whose needs ye from time to time supply[4] and to whom ye now have sent an epistle, Mesopotamia also and Pontus and Bithynia, and, in one word, all men everywhere exult in the harmony and brotherly love displayed and praise God for it.[5]

[The two following extracts are translated from Syriac versions, and I am indebted for them to Mr. N. MacLean of Christ's College, Cambridge. The first has been put together out of two MSS. in the British Museum, neither of which contains the whole,

[1] Eusebius is mistaken in identifying this peace with the cessation of persecution: the reference is to the subsiding of the Novatianist schism in 254 which restored peace to Christendom. The surprise and joy were due to the violence of the language and other measures which the chief combatants (Stephen and Cyprian) had employed.

[2] Hadrian's colony in Mount Sion was so named (A.D. 132). Later on the older and more glorious name of Jerusalem was restored to the see.

[3] Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia († A.D. 260), and one of Origen's distinguished pupils. On the baptismal controversy he sided with Cyprian of Carthage.

[4] The adroit reference to the wonted liberality of the Roman Church is to be noted: other instances are given by Salmon, *Infallibility*, p. 375.

[5] Here again Dionysius shows his adroitness, if Benson (*Cyprian*, p. 357) is right in thinking that the list of churches he gives suggests a repetition of the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Ghost (Acts ii. 9 f.).

and was printed by Pitra, *Analecta Sacra*, Vol. IV. The Greek original of most of the first sentence is preserved in a catena on Deuteronomy, *Cod. Vat.* 1521, fol. 591, and was first printed by Simon de Magistris in his edition of our author, p. 200. There is much probability that this extract formed part of the same letter to Stephanus as the extract from Eusebius which precedes it here. The second extract is found in three other Syriac MSS. in the British Museum, but is less certainly part of this letter, or indeed authentic at all.]

(2) If so be that any man speak a wicked thing of God like those who call Him unpitying [1] or any man living in the fear of other gods, the Law has commanded that such a one be stoned : [2] but we would stone these men with sound words of faith. Or if a man receive not at all the mystery [3] of Christ or alter and distort it—(saying) that He is not God, or that he did not become a man, or that He did not die, or that He did not rise, or that He will not come to judge the quick and the dead—or preach anything else apart from what we preached, let him be a curse, says Paul.[4] Or if so be he have wronged the word concerning the resurrection of the flesh, let him be already reckoned with the dead. For we speak in carefulness concerning these things—in order that we may be in agreement one with another, churches with churches, bishops with bishops, priests with priests. And in regard to causes and affairs about matters which concern individual men—how it is

[1] Cp. the letter to Dionysius, p. 58.
[2] Lev. xxiv. 13–16.
[3] The word here used represents *μυστήριον*, denoting the Christian revelation as *μυστήριον* often does.
[4] Cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 22 and Gal. i. 8, 9.

right to receive him who approaches from without and how him who comes from within[1]—we counsel to obey those who stand at the head of every place who by Divine election[2] are put into this ministration—leaving to our Lord the judgment of all things which they do.

(3) Those who were baptized in the name of the three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—though they were baptized by heretics who confess the three Persons, shall not be re-baptized. But those who are converted from other heresies shall be perfected by the baptism of the Holy Church.[3]

To Xystus (or Sixtus) II[4]

(Eus., *H. E.* vii. 5, 3–6)

(*The second on the same subject*)

(1) (Stephen) therefore had sent word concerning Helenus and concerning Firmilianus, and all the bishops of Cilicia and Cappadocia and (be it noted)

[1] The former are converts from heathenism, or perhaps from heresy; the latter Christians who have lapsed.

[2] The word here is the Greek χειροτονία in Syriac letters, and so might also be rendered "ordination."

[3] The MSS. from which this extract comes state that it is from a letter to Dionysius and Stephanus of Rome. No such letter is otherwise known, and it is not likely that Stephen's name would come second, as he was then bishop and Dionysius only a presbyter, though later on he became bishop. Possibly it is from the letter which our Dionysius tells us he wrote to his Roman namesake and Philemon when they were of the same opinion as Stephen: see p. 55. As far as the contents of the extract go, it is not at all incredible that Dionysius was willing to admit the validity of such baptisms as are specified: it was only heresies of a very fundamental kind which he considered to invalidate baptism.

[4] The successor to Stephanus in 257 as Bishop of Rome: he was martyred after one year's reign.

of Galatia and all the neighbouring churches likewise—to the effect that he would not hold communion with them for this same reason, since, he says, they re-baptize the heretics.[1] And observe the importance of the matter. For decrees had really been passed about it in the largest synods of the bishops,[2] as I am informed, so that those who come over from heretical bodies, after a course of instruction, are washed and cleansed from the defilement of the old and unclean leaven.[3] About all this also I have written asking him for information.

(2) To our beloved fellow-presbyters also, Dionysius and Philemon, who had formerly sided with Stephanus and were correspondents of mine on the same matter, I have written briefly the first time and more fully now.[4]

(3) The teaching which is now at work in Ptolemais of Pentapolis,[5] is impious, full of blasphemy about

[1] This was, according to Benson (*Cyprian*, p. 354), a threat which he did not actually carry into effect, and was only meant to restrain them from adopting Cyprian's attitude on the matter.

[2] *i. e.* those of Iconium and Synnada (*circ.* 230) : Dionysius may also be referring to the three much more recent councils which Cyprian had held at Carthage between 254 and 256 (*i. e.* since his letter to Stephen above). By this time he had by patient inquiry found out much more than he had known at first of what was necessary to be known before coming to a decision.

[3] Cf. 1 Cor. vi. 11 and v. 7, 8.

[4] See note on p. 54. Dionysius became afterwards Bishop of Rome in 259 : a fragment of a letter from our Dionysius to him is printed on p. 58. His famous letter to our Dionysius on the Sabellian controversy is not included in this volume. Part of a letter to Philemon is given on p. 56. He was a Roman Presbyter.

[5] On the north-west coast of Cyrenaica, one of the five chief cities which gave its name to the Libyan Pentapolis. Sabellius denied the three Persons in the Trinity, and held that the Person of the Father who is One with the Son was incarnate in Christ : see further p. 19.

the Almighty God and Father [1] of our Lord Jesus Christ and full of unbelief about His only begotten Son,[2] the First-born of all creation,[3] the Incarnate Word, and displays want of perception concerning the Holy Spirit. And therefore, when both official communications from both parties arrived and some of the brethren sought personal interviews with me, I wrote what I could [4] by the Divine assistance and gave a somewhat methodical explanation of the matter, a copy of which I have sent you.

To Philemon

(Eus., *H. E.* vii. 7)

(*The third on the same subject*)

(1) I read both the critical researches and the traditional treatises [5] of the heretics, defiling my soul a little with their abominable opinions and yet gaining this advantage from them, that I could

[1] There seems no doubt that this is the right reading here, though most of the MSS. read "God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ"; but clearly Dionysius is only speaking of God the Father in this clause and of Jesus Christ in the next. See 2 Cor. i. 2, Eph. i. 3, etc.

[2] It was Dionysius's treatment of this subject which afterwards gave Arius the heresiarch of Alexandria an opening for claiming his teaching in support of his own tenets, though there is no Arian suggestion, of course, in this phrase: see p. 20.

[3] Col. 15.

[4] Eus., *H. E.* vii. 26, mentions letters to Ammonius, Bishop of Bernice, Telesphorus Euphranor and Euporus in this connexion. Athanasius appears only to have known one joint letter to Ammonius and Euphranor.

[5] Dionysius seems to distinguish here two kinds of writings: (1) those that were based on systematic research and criticism, and (2) those that handed on the more traditional and less critical views and statements of the past.

refute them for myself and abhor them much more thoroughly. And indeed when a certain brother among the presbyters tried to restrain me and frighten me from contaminating myself with the mire of their iniquity (he said I should ruin my soul, and, as I perceived, there was truth in what he said), a heaven-sent vision [1] came and strengthened me, and words came to me which expressly ordered me thus: "Read all that may come to thy hands: for thou art competent to sift and test everything, and that was the original reason [2] of thy accepting the Faith." I acknowledged the vision as in agreement with the apostolic voice which says to the more able: "Approve yourselves bankers of repute." [3]

(2) This cause and rule I received from our blessed Father [4] Heraclas. For those that came over from the heretics, although they had apostatized from the Church—or rather had not even done that but were informed against as resorting to some heretical teacher, though still reputed members of our congregations—these he repelled from the Church, and

[1] Divine interposition is more vaguely suggested above on p. 44. S. Augustine's statement should also be compared, that at a critical moment of his conversion he heard a voice saying, "Take and read" (*Conf.* vii. 12, § 29); S. Polycarp likewise heard a voice from heaven saying, "Be strong and play the man," as he was led into the arena.

[2] See Introduction, p. 11.

[3] This is one of the more common apocryphal sayings usually attributed to our Lord: hence the epithet "apostolic" is somewhat strange.

[4] The word for "Father" here is *πάπας* (pope), a colloquial form of *πατήρ* applied to any bishop (or even to one of the inferior clergy sometimes) in the first ages. For Heraclas see p. 11. It is to be noticed, however, that this canon of his dealt not with heretical baptism (such as Dionysius is dealing with), but with actual or reputed perverts, and stated the terms on which they were to be restored to the Church of their baptism.

did not restore them at their request until they had publicly and fully stated all that they had heard among those who set themselves against us; and then he admitted them without requiring them to be re-baptized: for they had received that holy gift already.

(3) I have learnt this also, that the brethren in Africa [1] did not introduce this practice (of re-baptism) now for the first time, but it was also adopted some time ago among our predecessors as Bishops, in the most populous churches and well-attended synods of the brethren, viz. in Iconium and Synnada,[2] and I cannot bring myself to reverse their decisions and involve them in strife and controversy. For "thou shalt not remove," it says, "thy neighbour's boundaries, which thy fathers set." [3]

To Dionysius of Rome

(Eus., *H. E.* vii. 7, 6 and 8)

(*The fourth letter on Baptism*)

For with Novatian we are reasonably indignant, seeing that he has cut the Church in two and dragged certain of the brethren into impieties and blasphemies and introduced the most unholy teaching about God and accuses the most gracious Jesus Christ our Lord of being without pity,[4] and besides all this sets at

[1] *i. e.* the Church in Africa Proconsularis, of which Carthage was the metropolis and Cyprian the metropolitan.

[2] Iconium was the chief city of Lycaonia (see Acts xiii. and xiv.), and Synnada was an important town in Phrygia Salutaris. These synods had been held some twenty-five years before (in A.D. 230).

[3] Deut. xix. 14.

[4] See above, p. 53.

nought the holy laws and overthrows the confession of faith before baptism,[1] and altogether banishes the Holy Spirit from them, even though there were some hope of His remaining or even of His returning to them.[2]

To Xystus (Sixtus) II, Bishop of Rome

(Eus., *H. E.* vii. 9)

(*The fifth about Baptism*)

I truly desire counsel, brother, and ask an opinion from you, being afraid lest after all I am wrong in my treatment of a case that has come before me as follows—

One who is reckoned faithful among the brethren who meet together, of old standing, having been a member even before my ordination (as Bishop), and I fancy even before the appointment of the blessed Heraclas, had been present at a recent baptism and heard the questions and answers (in that service). He came to me weeping and bemoaning himself and falling at my feet, confessing and protesting that the baptism he had received among the heretics was not this, nor had anything in common with it: for that was full of impiety and blasphemies:[3] and he said that he was now sore pricked in the soul and had no courage even to lift up his eyes to God,

[1] A confession of faith has always been required before baptism: this Novatian virtually ignored by his action.

[2] Here as elsewhere Dionysius shows his breadth of view about God in recognizing that the Holy Spirit might in some measure remain even with the lapsed.

[3] It is strange that so old a believer should never have noticed the difference before, but baptism was almost entirely confined at that time to Easter and Whitsuntide, and he may have always been absent.

because he had started with such unholy words and rites, and so he begged to obtain this thorough means of purification and acceptance and grace. But this I did not venture to do, saying that his so long being in communion with us was sufficient for the purpose. For as he had heard the Giving of Thanks (Eucharist) and joined in saying the Amen,[1] and stood [2] at the Table [3] and stretched forth his hands to receive the holy Food and had taken it and partaken of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ for a considerable period, I should not venture to put him back to the beginning once more. So I bade him take courage and approach for the receiving of the Holy Things with sure faith and good hope. But he ceases not to grieve, and shrinks from approaching the Table and can with difficulty be persuaded to stand with (the *Consistentes*) [4] for the Prayers.

To Conon [5]

(Pitra, *Spic. Sol.* i. 15, from a Bodl. MS. dated 1062)

As to those who are nearing the end of life, if they desire and beg to obtain absolution, having before

[1] Cp. 1 Cor. xiv. 16. The Amen is either that after the Consecration of the Elements or at the Reception of them.

[2] "Standing" was, and is still, the posture in the East: Scudamore, *Not. Euch.*, p. 637.

[3] A somewhat rare word for "Altar" without some descriptive epithet like "holy" or "mystic."

[4] The *Consistentes* were the last order of penitents, who were allowed to remain after the dismissal of the catechumens and other penitents, but did not join in the oblation or communion itself: cf. Canons of Nicæa, No. xi.

[5] The letter from which this is supposed to be an extract is said by Eusebius (*H. E.* vi. 46, 2) to have been on the subject of Repentance, and may possibly be "the instruction" which Dionysius says he had given on p. 42 above.

their eyes the judgment to which they are departing, considering what is in store for them, if they are handed over thereto bound and condemned, and believing that they will gain relief and lightening of punishment there, if they be loosed here—for these the approval of the Lord is true and assured—these, too, it is part of the Divine mercy to send on their way free. If, however, they afterwards continue to live, it does not appear to me consistent to bind them again and load them with their sins. For when once absolved and reconciled to God, and pronounced again to be partakers of Divine grace and dispatched as free to appear before the Lord,[1] so long as nothing wrong has been done by them in the meantime to bring them back into bondage for their sins were most unreasonable. Shall we after that[2] impose on God the limits of our judgment, to be kept by Him while we observe them not ourselves, making parade of the goodness of the Lord[3] but withholding our own? Nevertheless if any one, after recovery, should show himself in need of further treatment, we counsel him, of his own accord, to humble and abase and lower himself, with a view to his own improvement and also to what is seemly in the eyes of the brethren and irreproachable before those without.[4] If he consent to this, he will be the gainer: but, if he should object and refuse, then no doubt that will be a sufficient ground for a second exclusion.

[1] Viz. under the impression that they were going to die.
[2] *i. e.* after thus pledging ourselves to them.
[3] Cf. 1 Pet. ii. 3, where Ps. xxxiii. (xxxiv.) 9 is quoted.
[4] Cf. 1 Tim. iii. 7, etc.

From the Writings about Repentance

(Mai, *Class. Auct.* x. 484, from a Vat. MS.)

But now we do the contrary. For him whom Christ in His goodness seeks when wandering upon the mountains, and calls to Himself when fleeing, and lays upon His shoulders when found at last,[1] him we resolutely repel when he approaches. Nay, let us not adopt so evil a counsel for our own sake, nor drive the sword into our own heart. For they that endeavour to injure or, on the other hand, to benefit others, may not altogether have the effect they desired upon them, but they do bring about good or evil for themselves and replenish their store either of heavenly virtues or of undisciplined affections. And these taking good angels as their companions and fellow-travellers,[2] both here and hereafter, in all peace and freedom from every evil, will be allotted the most blessed inheritances for eternity and will ever be with God, the greatest good of all; and those will forfeit at once the peace of God and their own peace, and both here and after death will be handed over to tormenting demons. Let us then not repel those who return, but gladly welcome them and number them with those who have not strayed, and thus supply that which is wanting[3] in them.

[1] The reference is to Luke xv. 4 ff. and Ezek. xxxiv. 6, etc.

[2] Dionysius is thinking perhaps of the story in Tobit v. 6, where Raphael becomes the companion of Tobit's son Tobias on his journey.

[3] On the principle that "charity thinketh no evil . . . but hopeth all things" (1 Cor. xiii.): similar but not identical phrases (in words or sense) are found 1 Cor. xvi. 17, 2 Cor. ix. 12, xi. 9, Phil. ii. 30, and Col. i. 24.

To Domitius and Didymus

(Eus., *H. E.* vii. 11)

(Part of an Easter Letter)

(1) It is superfluous to mention by name the many members of our body, who are unknown to you: but you should know that men and women, young and old, soldiers[1] and civilians, every class and age, some by the scourge and fire and some by the sword have conquered in the fight and carried off their crowns, while with some even a very long period did not prove sufficient to show them acceptable to the Lord (as martyrs), as in fact seems to be the case even now with me.[2] Wherefore I have been put off until a time which He Himself knows to be the right one by Him who saith: "In a time acceptable I heard thee, and in the day of salvation I succoured thee."[3] For since you inquire and wish to be informed how we fare, by all means hear our experiences: how that when we were being led away prisoners by a centurion and duumviri[4] with their soldiers and servants, viz. myself and Gaius, Faustus, Peter and Paul, certain of the inhabitants of the Mareotis came upon us, and with violence dragged us off against our will and in spite of our protests.[5] And now I with Gaius and Peter only, deprived of the company of the other

[1] The difficulties of soldiers becoming and remaining Christians were peculiarly great under the early Emperors.

[2] That is, some had not yet been called upon to be actual martyrs, Dionysius among them who was still in exile.

[3] Is. xlix. 8.

[4] These were the same civil officials as those mentioned in Acts vi. 20 at Philippi, with their servants, there called lictors (ῥαβδοῦχοι): the soldiers belonged to the centurion, of course.

[5] This has already been described on p. 44.

brethren,[1] am shut in a desolate and dreary part of Libya, three days' journey from Parætonium.[2]

And further on he says—

(2) In the city there have concealed themselves, secretly looking after the brethren, from among the presbyters Maximus,[3] Dioscorus, Demetrius and Lucius (for Faustinus and Aquila, who were better known in the world, are wandering in other parts of Egypt), and of the deacons Faustus, Eusebius and Chæremon, who survived those who perished in the pestilence.[4] Eusebius was he whom from the beginning God strengthened and inspired to perform many services for the confessors in prison with all energy, and to carry out at no small risk the last offices for the perfect[5] and blessed martyrs in decking out their bodies (for burial). For up till now the Prefect does not cease from cruelly slaying some of those who are brought before him, as I have already said, and from tearing others in pieces with instruments of torture, while he crushes the spirits of others again with chains and imprisonment, forbidding any to visit them and making search lest any should be found doing so. Nevertheless, God gives them some respite from their miseries through the zeal and steadfast efforts of the brethren.

[1] Including Timotheus, who had been the means of his escape.

[2] A town on the coast 150 miles west of Alexandria.

[3] He and the three deacons have already been mentioned on p. 46. They must have left Dionysius when he went into exile and returned to Alexandria.

[4] "In the island," according to Rufinus's version, but it is not clear what island he means: the pestilence is probably one of those frequent epidemics which devastated North Africa and other districts of the empire.

[5] The epithet "perfect," though applied to believers generally in the New Testament (Matt. v. 28, etc.), was later specially used of martyrs.

To Hermammon

(Eus., *H. E.* vii. 1, 10, 23)

(*Part of another Easter Letter*)

(1) Even Gallus[1] did not know the flaw in Decius's policy, nor did he foresee what it was that upset him, but stumbled over the same stone that was right before his eyes. For, though his reign was prospering and things were going according to his mind, he drove into exile the holy men who were interceding with God for his peace and health, with the effect that with them he drove out also their prayers on his behalf.

So far on that point, and then again he discourses about Valerian in the same letter—

(2) To John also it is revealed in like manner, when he says: "There was given him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemy, and there was given him authority and forty-two months."[2] And both these things are to be wondered at in the case of Valerian,[3] and of them it is especially to be observed how his prosperity lasted so long as he was gentle and well-disposed towards the men of God.[4] For

[1] Gallus succeeded to the empire on the death of Decius and his sons in 251, and reigned till 253, when it was wrested from him by Æmilian, who was in turn ousted by Valerian after four months' rule. Dionysius makes no mention of this episode, though he does of Macrian's attempt later.

[2] The quotation is from Rev. xiii. 5, but the last words follow a reading which has no support in the MSS. It should also be noticed that Dionysius does not think it at all certain that the author of the Revelation is the Evangelist: see p 86.

[3] Valerian reigned from 253 till his disappearance in 260. The duration of the persecution was forty-two months, from before midsummer 257 till late in 260.

[4] Here the expression means Christians generally, not prophets or clergy as often.

none of the Emperors before him were so kindly and favourably affected towards them, not even those who were said to have been openly Christians,[1] as he manifestly was, receiving them at the beginning in a most familiar and friendly spirit: indeed, his whole house was filled with devout persons and was a veritable Church of God.[2] But he was persuaded to abandon this treatment by that tutor and chief ruler of Egyptian magicians,[3] who instructed him to slay or persecute, as adversaries and hinderers of his vile and detestable sorcerers, the pure and holy persons, who are and were able to confound the devices of accursed demons by being present and seen and merely breathing on them and uttering words,[4] while he also incited him to perform unholy rites and detestable juggleries and abominable sacrifices such as the killing of wretched boys and the slaying of unhappy fathers' children and the dividing of new-born entrails asunder and the cutting up and mutilating of bodies which are God's creation,[5] in the hope that such doings would bring them Divine favour.

[1] Alexander Severus and Philip the Arabian are no doubt meant.

[2] Compare such expressions in S. Paul's letters as Rom. xvi. 5, 1 Cor. xvi. 11, etc.

[3] No doubt Macrianus is meant, who is mentioned further on, but it is difficult to account for the exact epithets which Dionysius here applies to him. Apparently he had been Valerian's tutor in some kind of magic, and had allied himself somehow with the Jewish colony in Alexandria (hence ἀρχισυνάγωγος), who would, of course, be hostile to the Christians.

[4] Christian exorcists must be meant, though the claim to supernatural powers which Dionysius makes for them is sufficiently remarkable.

[5] This was a frequent charge against the Christians themselves. Here Dionysius turns it against their persecutors in Egypt.

And to this he adds as follows—

(3) Fine offerings at all events did Macrianus make to them (sc. the demons) to propitiate them for the Empire which he hoped for, when, in his former position as so-called officer in charge of the Emperor's general (*καθόλου*) accounts he entertained no reasonable (*εὔλογον*) nor catholic (*καθολικόν*) sentiments,[1] but fell under the prophet's curse, who says: "Woe to those who prophesy out of their own heart and see not the general (*τὸ καθόλου*) view." [2] For he did not understand the workings of Universal (*καθόλου*) Providence,[3] nor suspect the approach of Judgment on the part of Him who is before all things and through all things and over all things.[4] Wherefore he has become also the enemy of His universal (*καθολικῆς*) Church and has alienated and estranged himself from God's mercy and banished himself as far as possible from his own salvation, verifying in this his personal name.[5]

And again further on he says—

(4) For Valerian, through being persuaded to this

[1] It is very difficult, without a knowledge of Latin and Greek, to understand Dionysius's play on words throughout this section. The office which Macrianus held was that of, in Latin, *Rationalis* or *Procurator summæ rei*, in Greek *ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν καθόλου λόγων* (something like our Chancellor of the Exchequer): hence Dionysius says he was not *rational* (or reasonable) in his treatment of the Christians and showed no *catholic* spirit towards them.

[2] Ezek. xiii. 3. Dionysius takes the last phrase (*τὸ καθόλου*), as if it was the object of the verb, not an adverb, in order to suit his argument.

[3] This may perhaps mean that besides his other faults Macrianus was tainted with the atheistic views of the Epicureans, while Dionysius also alludes in this sentence to the accounts which Macrianus would have to present to the Emperor of his own administration.

[4] Cf. Eph. iv. 6 and Col. i. 17.

Another play on words, as if Macrianus was derived from the Greek *μακρός* (far off), which is somewhat doubtful

policy by him, exposed himself to insults and injuries according to that which was said to Isaiah: "And these men chose their ways and their abominations which their soul desired, and I will choose their mockings and will recompense them their sins."[1]

But this man (Macrianus) in his mad lust after imperial power for which he had no qualifications, being unable to deck his own crippled body with the imperial robes, put forward his two sons, who thus became liable for their father's sins.[2] For the prophecy clearly applies to them which God spake: "visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."[3] For he brought upon his sons' heads his own evil desires in which he had succeeded and involved them in the consequences of his own wickedness and hatred of God.[4]

Then there is a section in which he refers to the peaceful times under Gallienus—

(5) So after thus inciting one of the Emperors before him and attacking the other, he speedily vanished with all his family, root and branch,[5] whilst Gallienus was proclaimed and acknowledged by all, being at

[1] Is. lxvi. 3, 4 (LXX). Here the reference is to Valerian falling into the hands of Sapor, the Persian King, who inflicted grievous insults upon him, and kept him in captivity till his death.

[2] Macrianus was lame of one leg. After Valerian's defeat and disappearance (in 260), for which he was himself largely responsible, Macrianus and his two sons, Macrianus junior and Quietus, made an abortive attempt to seize the throne, which was soon defeated.

[3] Ex. xx. 5.

[4] The two Macriani were defeated and slain by Aureolus, another usurper, in Illyricum, and Quietus was put to death in the East.

[5] Dionysius is still speaking of Macrianus, who had incited Valerian to attack the Persians, and then had himself attacked Gallienus and tried to usurp the throne.

once the old and the new Emperor, having preceded the usurpers and remaining after them. For, in accordance with that which was spoken to the prophet Isaiah, " behold the things predicted from the beginning have come to pass, and new things which will now arise." [1] For as a cloud having overcast the sun's rays and screened them for a while shades it and shows itself in its stead, and then when the cloud has passed off or been dissipated the sun which was shining before emerges and shines forth again, so it is with Macrianus; after coming forward and gaining access for himself to the imperial power which belonged to Gallienus, he ceases to be, since he was of no account, and the other resumes the position he had before. And the Empire, having cast off, as it were, its old age and purged itself of its former badness, now bursts into greater splendour, is seen and heard from afar and pervades the whole world.

Then in due order he indicates the date of this letter in these words—

(6) And once more it occurs to me to consider the days and years of this period of the Empire. For I observe that the ungodly persons (I have mentioned) after a short period of honourable mention have lost their good name, but (Gallienus) who was more righteous and loved God better,[2] having completed

[1] Is. xlii. 9, but Dionysius has substituted, for the last phrase, a phrase from xliii. 19. The original prophecy applies to the triumph of Cyrus and the conversion of the world to the worship of Jehovah. Its application in the text strikes us to-day as too fanciful.

[2] Whether Gallienus himself was really a Christian is very doubtful, but his wife, Cornelia Salonina, seems to have been.

the seven years' period, is now passing through his ninth year : [1] therefore let us keep the Feast.[2]

To the Brethren in Alexandria

(Eus., *H. E.* vii. 22)

(*Part of another Easter Letter*)

(1) Other men would not think the present a time for keeping festival : nor, indeed, is this nor any other such a time to them ; I speak not of times obviously sorrowful, but even of such as they might consider most joyful. In these days there are lamentations everywhere, and all are mourning : wailings resound through the city by reason of the number of the dead and the dying day by day For, as it is written about the firstborn of the Egyptians, so now also " a great cry arose : for there is not a house in which there is not one dead." [3] I would, indeed, there were but one ; for the things that have before now befallen us were truly many and grievous.[4] First of all they drove us into exile and we kept the feast

[1] This is a very obscure calculation, but the upshot of it may be as follows : Gallienus was associated with his father Valerian as Emperor seven years (253–60), then Macrianus usurped the power (in Egypt) for one year, or rather more ; thus Gallienus regained the power in his ninth year (*i. e.* after midsummer 261). Gallienus's original Edict of Peace was issued in Oct. 260, but the Rescript applying it to Egypt was delayed for some time. The Easter festival for which this letter was written, therefore, must have been that of 262.

[2] Cf. 1 Cor. v. 8. [3] Exod. xii. 30.

[4] I have translated the Berlin editor's reading here, as being the least unsatisfactory of those proposed. Others give a text which may be rendered : " I would this were all : for the things that befell us before drove us into many grievous troubles." But the exact meaning is doubtful, however we take it.

then too by ourselves, persecuted and harried to death by all, and every place where each particular affliction befel us became the scene of our festal assembly, open country, desert, ship, inn or prison, and our perfect[1] martyrs spent the brightest of all feasts, being entertained in heaven above. But after this war and famine seized us, which we endured in common with the Gentiles, having undergone alone all the injuries they had inflicted on us and then having to share in the evils they wrought on one another and suffered: and once more we rejoiced in the peace of Christ, which He has given to us alone. But now after we and they had obtained a very brief respite, this pestilence has overtaken us, which is to them a more fearful thing than all former fears and more terrible than any calamity whatever, and to quote an expression of an historian of their own,[2] "a thing which alone has exceeded all men's expectation," while to us it was not so much that as a discipline and a testing no less severe than any of the rest: for it did not spare us, though it attacked the Gentiles in great force.

To this he adds as follows—

(2) At all events most of the brethren through their love and brotherly affection for us spared not themselves nor abandoned one another, but without regard to their own peril visited those who fell sick, diligently looking after and ministering to them and cheerfully shared their fate with them, being infected with the disease from them and willingly involving

[1] This epithet for martyrs has already occurred on p. 64.

[2] This is none other than a quotation from Pericles's speech about the plague at Athens in Thucyd. ii. 64, though in Dionysius's original phrase it sounds as if he meant some local minor historian.

themselves in their troubles. Not a few also, after nursing others back to recovery, died themselves, taking death over from them and thus fulfilling in very deed the common saying, which is taken always as a note of mere good feeling; for in their departure they became their expiatory substitutes.[1] At all events, the very pick of our brethren lost their lives in this way, both priests and deacons and some highly praised ones from among the laity, so that this manner of dying does not seem far removed from martyrdom, being the outcome of much piety and stalwart faith. So, too, taking up the bodies of the saints on their arms and breasts, closing their eyes and shutting their mouths, bearing them on their shoulders and laying them out for burial, clinging to them, embracing them, washing them, decking them out, they not long after had the same services rendered to them; for many of the survivors followed in their train. But the Gentiles behaved quite differently: those who were beginning to fall sick they thrust away, and their dearest they fled from, or cast them half dead into the roads: unburied bodies they treated as vile refuse;[2] for they tried to avoid the spreading and communication of the fatal disease, difficult as it was to escape for all their scheming.

[1] The word Dionysius uses here is the same as S. Paul uses (1 Cor. iv. 13: περίψημα, offscouring). It is said to have been used at Athens of the human scapegoats thrown into the river in time of famine: "Be thou my expiation (περίψημα)." Elsewhere it seems to have degenerated into a sort of extravagant compliment: "I am your humble servant (περίψημα)." Dionysius suggests it might regain its more serious meaning in the present case.

[2] Here again Dionysius uses an expression suggested by S. Paul in Phil. iii. 8.

To Hierax an Egyptian Bishop

(Eus., *H. E.* vii. 21)

(*Part of another Easter Letter*)

But what is there surprising in its being difficult for me to correspond even by letter with those who are sojourning at a distance, seeing that it has proved impossible to talk even with myself and to take counsel with my own soul? At all events, with my own kith and kin, with the brethren of my own house and life, citizens of the same Church, I have to communicate by letters and to get them through seems impracticable. For it were easier for one to pass, I say not across the frontier, but even from East to West, than to visit one part of Alexandria from another. For that vast, pathless desert which it took Israel two generations to traverse is not so impassable and hard to cross as the central street of the city, nor is the sea, which they had for a carriage-road when the waters were parted asunder to make a passage through. And our still and waveless harbours[1] have become an image of those in the passing of which the Egyptians were overwhelmed; for they have often appeared like the Red Sea from the blood which was in them. And the river which flows past the city at one time appeared drier than the waterless desert and more parched than that which Israel crossed over when they were so thirsty that

[1] It is not clear whether Dionysius actually alludes here to the well-protected harbours of Alexandria or (more loosely) to the Lake Mareotis: probably to the former, because the canal he refers to in the next sentence (though he calls it a river) was cut from the Nile into one of the harbours and passed at the back of the city between it and the Lake Mareotis.

Moses cried out and drink flowed out of the steep rock from Him that worketh wonders:[1] and at another time it was so full as to overflow the whole neighbourhood, both roads and fields, and to threaten a return of the flood which occurred in the days of Noah. But in either case it runs polluted with blood and slaughter and drowned corpses, as under Moses it happened to Pharaoh, when the river turned to blood and stank.[2] And what other water could cleanse all this but the water which itself cleanseth all things?[3] How could the mighty ocean which man cannot cross, overspread and sweep away this horrid flood? or how could the great river that goeth out of Eden wash off the stain, though it were to divert the four heads into which it is divided into the single head of the Gihon?[4] or when would the air, reeking everywhere with the evil exhalation, become pure? For such mist from the ground and breezes from the sea, airs from the rivers and vapours from the harbours are given off that for dew we have the impure fluids of corpses rotting in all their component elements. After all this do men wonder, are they at a loss, whence come the continual pestilences, whence the dire diseases, whence the divers ravages, whence the wholesale destruction of life, why the largest city no longer contains in it its former multitude of inhabitants, from infant children to the most advanced in years, whom it used to nourish in other days to a

[1] Cf. Ps. lxxvii. 13, cxxxvi. 4, and Wisd. xi. 4. The whole passage, of course, refers to Exod. xiv. and xvii.

[2] Cf. Exod. vii. 20, 21.

[3] *i. e.* if the biggest river and the ocean itself, as he proceeds exaggeratedly to claim, cannot do so, what other cleansing can there be?

[4] Cf. Gen. ii. 10 ff. Dionysius evidently adopts the later Jewish view that the Gihon was the Nile, Æthiopia (or Cush) being identified with Egypt.

green old age,[1] as the saying went, whereas these from forty up to seventy years of age were so much more numerous then that their number is not now reached even when all from fourteen to eighty are enrolled and put together for the public distribution of food,[2] and thus those whose looks show them to be quite young have become as it were of equal age with those who have long been advanced in years. And though they see the race of man on earth thus dwindling ever and being exhausted, they do not tremble,[3] as its total extinction proceeds and draws near.

(*From another Easter Letter*)

[This fragment is given in the *Sacra Parallela Rupefucald.*, fol. 70 and 71, where it is ascribed to Dionysius's "Fourth Easter Letter." It is by no means clear which Letter is meant, but the main thought (of the cunning devices by which Love wins its way) is quaintly beautiful and well worthy of our author]

Love leaps out in utmost eagerness to confer some benefit even on an unwilling object: yea, often on one who shrinks in shame and tries to shun kind treatment from dislike of being burdensome to another, and

[1] The meaning of the phrase employed by Dionysius here ("hale old men") comes from Homer, *Il.* xxiii. 791 (cf. Virg., *Æn.* vi. 304); but elsewhere a very similar phrase seems to suggest "a cruel, untimely old age."

[2] Evidently at Alexandria (the capital of that country, which was the chief granary of Rome) either the necessitous citizens or perhaps all between forty and seventy were entitled to receive doles of corn; but now the relief was extended to all ages between fourteen and eighty.

[3] Either the heathen are meant, who ought to tremble and be convinced, or the Christians, who were too courageous through trust in God to tremble.

would fain put up with his annoyances alone, in order not to cause trouble and inconvenience to any. He that is full of Love craves leave to suffer and endure: to be in evil case, he thinks, gives opportunity for being helped, and he will do the greatest favour to another, not himself, if through that other the evil, which is his own, is made to cease.[1]

To Basilides, Bishop of the Churches in the Pentapolis (Cyrenaica)

[This canonical Letter was accepted at the third Council of Constantinople *in Trullo* (A.D. 680)]

Dionysius to Basilides my beloved son and brother and godly fellow-worker, greeting in the Lord.

(1) You sent to me, my most faithful and learned son, to inquire at what hour one ought to end the fast before Easter.[2] For you say that some of the brethren maintain one should do so at cockcrow:[3] and some at evening.[4] For the brethren in Rome, so they say, await the cockcrow: but concerning those in the Pentapolis you said they broke the fast sooner. And you ask me to set an exact limit and a definite hour, which is both difficult and risky. For it will be acknowledged by all alike that one ought to start the feast and the gladness after the time of our Lord's resurrection, up till then humbling our souls with

[1] The last sentence is involved and obscure. I am not sure that my paraphrase rightly expresses the thought.

[2] I have adopted our modern mode of expression, but in the early Church Pascha was often used for the fast which preceded Easter as well as for the feast itself, and that is how Dionysius uses it here.

[3] *i. e.* at 3 a.m. on Easter Day, the traditional hour of our Lord's Resurrection, especially in the West.

[4] *i. e.* at 6 p.m. on Easter Eve.

fastings. But by what you have written to me, you have quite soundly and with a good insight into the Divine Gospels established the fact that nothing definite appears in them about the hour at which He rose. For the Evangelists described those that came to the tomb diversely—that is, at different times, and all [1] said that they have found the Lord already risen: it was "late on the Sabbath day," as S. Matthew puts it: [2] and "early while it was yet dark," as S. John writes; and "at early dawn," as S. Luke; and "very early . . . when the sun was risen," as S. Mark. And when He rose, no one has clearly stated; but that "late on the Sabbath day, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week," about sunrise on that day those who arrived at the tomb found Him no longer lying in it, that is agreed to. And we must not imagine that the evangelists are at variance and contradict one another: but even if there seem to be some small dispute upon the matter of your inquiry—that is, if though all agree that the Light of the world [3] our Lord arose on that night, they differ about the hour, yet let us be anxious fairly and faithfully to harmonize what is said.

What is said, then, by Matthew runs thus: "Late on the Sabbath day, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the

[1] "All," *i. e.* "who came," or perhaps "all the four evangelists." The "difference" is not really confined to the time, but to the parties which came, the other devout women coming later than the two Marys.

[2] The four references are to Matt. xxviii. 1, John xx. 1, Luke xxiv. 1, and Mark xvi. 2.

[3] Cf. John ix. 5, etc.

stone and sat upon it. And his appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the watchers did quake and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus which hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said." As to this word which he uses for "late," some will think, in accordance with its common acceptation, that the evening of the Sabbath is signified; but others, understanding it more scientifically, will say it is not that, but "the dead of night," the word used signifying an advanced stage of lateness.[1] And because he means night and not evening, he adds "as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week" and (the women) had not yet come, as the rest say, "bringing spices" but "to see the sepulchre."[2] And they found the earthquake had occurred and the angel seated on the stone, and heard from him the words: "He is not here: he is risen." Similarly, John says: "On the first day of the week came Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from the tomb." However, by this account, "when it was still dark" although towards dawn, He

[1] The Council *in Trullo* (A.D. 680) accepted this second meaning and consented to Dionysius's ruling on the point raised without reserve.

[2] Dionysius thinks that S. Matthew's account, with which S. John's tallies, speaks of the two Marys coming to look at the tomb about midnight on Easter eve or morning, while S. Luke and S. Mark mentioned certain women who arrived at the tomb somewhat later, when the sun had just risen, but one at least of the Marys mentioned by S. Matthew is identical with one of those mentioned by S. Mark and apparently by S. Luke. Possibly, however, Dionysius means that the two Marys took part in both visits to the tomb. Dr. Swete on S. Mark and Dr. Westcott on S. John should be consulted by any one who wishes to pursue the question further.

had gone forth from the tomb. But Luke says: "On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment. But on the first day of the week at early dawn (the women) came unto the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb." "Early dawn" indicates, perchance, the morning light appearing before (the sun itself) on "the first day of the week." In consequence, it was when the Sabbath had now completely passed, with the night that followed, and when a new day was beginning that they came bringing the spices and ointments, by which time it is clear that He had risen long before. To this, also, corresponds what Mark says: "(The women) brought spices that they might come and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week they come to the tomb, when the sun was risen." For he, too, says "very early," which is the same thing as "at early dawn": and he has added, "when the sun was risen." For their start and their journey began, it is clear, "at early dawn" and "very early": but they had gone on spending time both on the road and around the tomb until sunrise. And on this occasion also [1] the white robed young man says to these women: "He is risen: he is not here."

As things stand thus, we pronounce this decision for those who inquire to a nicety at what hour or what half-hour, or quarter of an hour, they should begin their rejoicing at the Resurrection of our Lord from the dead: those who are premature and relax before midnight, though near it, we censure as remiss and wanting in self-restraint; for they drop out of the race just before the end, as the wise man says: "that

[1] *i. e.* as on the former occasion mentioned by S. Matthew and S. Mark.

which is within a little in life is not little."[1] And those who put off and endure to the furthest and persevere till the fourth watch, when our Saviour appeared to those who were sailing also, walking on the sea,[2] we shall approve as generous and painstaking. And those midway who stop as they were moved or as they were able, let us not treat altogether severely. For all do not continue during the six days of the fast either equally or similarly:[3] but some remain without food till cockcrow[4] on all the days, some on two, or three, or four, and some on none of them. And for those who strictly persist in these prolonged fasts and then are distressed and almost faint, there is pardon if they take something sooner. But if some, so far from prolonging their fast do not fast at all, but feed luxuriously during the earlier days of the week, and then, when they come to the last two and prolong their fast on them alone, viz. on Friday and Saturday, think they are performing some great feat by continuing till dawn, I do not hold that they have exercised an equal discipline with those who have practised it for longer periods. I give you this counsel

[1] The author of this saying (which is equivalent to our proverb, "A miss is as good as a mile") is not known. Basil (*de Baptism.* ii. 1) quotes something like it, but with a different turn, and he, too, attributes it to "one of our wise men," but perhaps he is only referring to Dionysius in this passage.

[2] Cf. Matt. xiv. 26.

[3] He means the six days of what we call Holy Week, but he gives no indication whether the Lenten fast was then confined to those days in Alexandria and the Pentapolis or lasted longer. By "equally" he proceeds to explain is meant the length of the fasting (six days or two, and so on), and by "similarly" the manner or degree of it (till cockcrow or till evening).

[4] The verb used (*ὑπερτιθέναι*, Lat. *superponere*, to exceed) is the technical one for this prolonged fast: the ordinary fast ended at 6 p.m. and that of the station days (Wednesday and Friday) at 3 p.m.

in accordance with my judgment in writing on these points.

[Three rulings follow on points which it is not necessary to set out here]

(2) These answers I give you from respect for you, beloved, not because you were ignorant of the subjects of your inquiry but to render us of one mind and soul [1] with yourself, as indeed we are. And I have set forth my opinion for you to share not as a teacher but as it becomes us to discuss one with another in all simplicity: and when you have considered it again, my most sagacious son, you should write again and tell me whatever seems to you better or what you judge to be as I have said.

I pray that you may prosper, my beloved son, as you minister to the Lord [2] in peace.

[1] Cf. 1 Pet. iii. 8 and Phil. ii. 20.

[2] The expression comes from Acts xiii. 2, where, however, it describes a special act of worship rather than "ministering" in general.

TREATISES

"On the Promises"

(Eus., *H. E.* vii. 24 and 25)

(1) Seeing that they bring forward a composition of Nepos,[1] on which they rely too much as showing irrefutably that the Kingdom of Christ will be on earth, though I accept and love Nepos for many other things, his faith, his laboriousness, his study of the Scriptures, and the many psalms he has written,[2] by which already many of the brethren are encouraged, and though I hold him in all the greater respect because he has gone to his rest before us, yet the truth is so dear to me and to be preferred that I can indeed applaud and give my full assent to right propositions, but must examine and correct whatever appears to be unsoundly stated. And if he were still with us and propounding his views merely by word of mouth, a discussion without writing would have sufficed to persuade and convince our opponents by way of question and answer. But now that this writing of his is published, which many think most convincing, and certain teachers hold the law and the prophets

[1] Nepos had apparently been Bishop of Arsenoe in Egypt, and was the author of a work (Ἔλεγχος Ἀλληγοριστῶν) putting forward grossly material views of the Millennium. Dionysius refuted it in a carefully prepared treatise in two books. This extract is from the second book, and deals chiefly with the authorship of the Revelation of St. John the Divine in a way very characteristic of his large-hearted and broad-minded spirit.

[2] Or Dionysius may mean that he had encouraged the singing of the Psalms in service.

of no account and have relinquished the following of the Gospels and depreciated the Epistles of the Apostles, while they parade the teaching of this book as if it were some great and hidden mystery and will not allow our simpler brethren to hold any high and noble opinion either about the glorious and truly Divine appearing of our Lord [1] or about our rising from the dead and our gathering together and being made like unto Him,[2] but persuade them to hope for mean and passing enjoyments like the present in the Kingdom of God, it is necessary that we also should discuss the matter with our brother Nepos as if he were still alive.

Further on he adds—

(2) So being in the district of Arsenoe, where, as you know,[3] this teaching prevailed long before, so that both schisms and the defection of whole churches have occurred, I called together the presbyters and teachers [4] among the brethren in the villages, such of the brethren as wished being also present, and invited them publicly to make an examination of the matter. And when some brought forward against me this book as an impregnable weapon and bulwark, I sat with them three days in succession from dawn till evening and tried to correct the statements made. During which time I was much struck with the steadiness, the desire for truth, the aptness in following an argument and the intelligence displayed by the

[1] Cf. Tit. ii. 13, 2 Thess. ii. 8, etc.

[2] The reference is to 2 Thess. ii. 1 and 1 John iii. 2.

[3] It does not appear to whom Dionysius addressed this treatise, but he usually did address what he wrote to some particular person.

[4] Here the two offices are conjoined as in 1 Tim. v. 17. The "teacher" as an officer of the Church is mentioned in several of the early Church Orders.

brethren, whilst we put our questions and difficulties and points of agreement in an orderly and reasonable manner, avoiding the mistake of holding jealously at any cost to what we had once thought, even though it should now be shown to be wrong, and yet not suppressing what we had to say on the other side, but, as far as possible, attempting to grapple with and master the propositions in hand without being ashamed to change one's opinion and yield assent if the argument convinced us, conscientiously and unfeignedly, with hearts spread open before God, accepting what was established by the exposition and teaching of the holy Scriptures.

At last the champion and mouthpiece of this doctrine, the man called Coracion,[1] in the hearing of all the brethren that were present agreed and testified to us that he would no longer adhere to it nor discourse upon it nor yet mention nor teach it, on the ground that he had been convinced by what had been said against it. And of the rest of the brethren some rejoiced at the conference and the reconciliation and harmonious arrangement which was brought about by it between all parties.

Further on he says this about the Revelation of John—

(3) Certain people[2] therefore before now discredited and altogether repudiated the book, both examining it chapter by chapter and declaring it unintelligible

[1] Nothing more is known of him: either he had succeeded to the leadership since the death of Nepos, or on this particular occasion took the lead.

[2] The allusion is probably to Gaius of Rome and his school rather than to the Alogi, as they were called, of the East; but both these bodies were strongly opposed to Millenarian views.

and inconclusive and that it makes a false statement in its title.[1] For they say it is not John's, no nor yet a "Revelation," because of the heavy, thick veil of obscurity which covers it:[2] and not only is the author of this book not one of the Apostles but he is not even one of the saints nor a churchman at all;[3] it is Cerinthus,[4] the founder of the heresy that was called Cerinthian from him, and he desired to attribute his own composition to a name that would carry weight. For the substance of his teaching was this, that Christ's Kingdom will be on earth, and he dreams that it will be concerned with things after which he himself, being fond of bodily pleasures and very sensual, hankered, such as the satisfying of his belly and lower lusts, that is eating and drinking and marrying and such means as he thought would provide him more decorously with these pleasures, feasts and sacrifices and the slaying of victims. I should not myself venture to reject the book, seeing that many brethren hold it in high esteem, but, reckoning the decision about it to be beyond my powers of mind, I consider the interpreting of its various contents to be recondite and matter for much wonder. For without fully understanding, I yet surmise that some deeper

[1] If this refers to a formal division into chapters, it disappeared afterwards, for a new division was devised in the sixth century, on which our present system is partly based.

[2] Dionysius plays here on the meaning of the Greek word for Revelation, ἀποκάλυψις, "unveiling." He is fond of such a device.

[3] If that is the meaning of the words employed, then "saints" (ἅγιοι) is not used in its New Testament sense for the "faithful" generally, but a distinction is made more like the later use of the word for those who attained higher saintliness than the rest; but perhaps the phrase for "churchmen" implies "clerical or ecclesiastical persons," and "saints" has its earlier sense.

[4] Cerinthus was the earliest exponent of Gnostic views and as such much abhorred by St. John the Apostle.

meaning underlies the words, not measuring and judging them by calculations of my own; but giving the preference to faith,[1] I have come to the conclusion that they are too high for me to comprehend, and so I do not reject what I have not taken in, but can only wonder at these visions which I have not even seen (much less understood).

Besides this, after examining the book as a whole and showing that it is impossible to understand it in its literal sense, he proceeds—

(4) So having completed practically the whole prophecy, the prophet[2] pronounces a blessing on those who keep it and indeed on himself also: for "blessed," saith he, "is he that observeth the words of the prophecy of this book and I John who saw and heard these things."[3] That he was called John, therefore, and that the writing is John's I will not dispute. For I agree that it is the work of some holy and inspired person but I should not readily assent to his being the Apostle, the son of Zebedee, the brother of James, whose is the Gospel entitled "According to John" and the General Epistle.[4] For I conclude that he is not the same (1) from the character of each, (2) from the style of the language and (3) from what

[1] *i. e.* reckoning that it is a matter where faith rather than reason should act; or perhaps the translation should be "giving more weight to (the author's) trustworthiness."

[2] This title is to be noticed, as the author himself never actually describes himself by it. Dionysius is much more cautious as to the authorship than Origen, his former master, who attributed the book to St. John the Evangelist without hesitation, according to Eusebius, *H. E.* vi. 25, 9.

[3] Rev. xxii. 7, 8: but Dionysius has no authority for joining the latter clause on to the former, its construction being "it is I John who saw and heard."

[4] *i. e.* the First Epistle of St. John; the second and third were not so described at first and rightly so.

may be called the arrangement of the book. For the Evangelist nowhere inserts his name nor yet proclaims himself either in the Gospel or in the Epistle. . . .

(5) But John nowhere speaks either in the first or in the third person about himself, whereas he that wrote the Revelation straightway at the beginning puts himself forward: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which he gave him to show to his servants speedily, and he sent and signified (it) by his angel to his servant John who bare witness of the word of God and of his testimony, even of all things that he saw." [1]

Then he also writes an Epistle: "John to the seven churches that are in Asia, grace to you and peace." [2] Whereas the Evangelist did not put his name even at the head of the Catholic Epistle but began with the mystery of the Divine revelation [3] without any superfluous words: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes." [4]

For it is over this revelation that the Lord also pronounced Peter blessed, saying: "Blessed art thou Simon bar Jona, because flesh and blood did not reveal it to thee, but my heavenly Father." [5] Nay, even in the second and third extant Epistles of John, short

[1] Rev. i. 1, 2. One might almost think Dionysius was quoting from memory, for he follows no extant text in omitting "God" before "gave" (thus making Jesus Christ the subject and "him" = "to John") and "the things which must come to pass" before "speedily": also he substitutes "his testimony" for "the testimony of Jesus Christ," though "his" still = "Jesus Christ."

[2] Rev. i. 4.

[3] Dionysius seems to contrast the "Divine revelation" of the Epistle which we can trust with that of the Book so-called about which he felt less sure.

[4] 1 John i. 1.

[5] Matt. xvi. 17. Dionysius substitutes the adjective "heavenly" for "which is in heaven."

though they are, John does not appear by name but he writes himself "the elder" anonymously. Whereas our author did not even consider it sufficient to mention himself by name once and then proceed with his subject, but he repeats the name again, "I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and in the patience of Jesus, was in the isle that is called Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus."[1] In fact, at the end also he says this: "Blessed is he that observeth the words of the prophecy of this book and I John who saw and heard these things."[2] That he which wrote these things, therefore, is John, we must believe as he says so: but which John is not clear. For he does not say, as in many places in the Gospel, that he is the disciple beloved of the Lord, nor the one that reclined on His breast, nor yet the brother of James, nor yet the one that was the eyewitness and hearer of the Lord. Surely he would have used one of the aforesaid descriptions, when desirous of clearly identifying himself. And yet he does nothing of the kind, but calls himself our brother and partaker with us, and witness of Jesus and blessed for the seeing and hearing of the revelations. I suppose that many bore the same name as John the Apostle, who by reason of their love towards him and from their admiration and emulation of him and desire to be loved by the Lord like him, were glad to bear the same name with him, even as many a one among the children of the faithful is called Paul or Peter.[3] There is then another

[1] Rev. i. 9. Here again the text is somewhat inaccurate "in the patience of Jesus" having no support elsewhere.

[2] Rev. xxii. 7. See note on p. 86, above.

[3] It would seem likely, but by no means certain, that Dionysius is speaking of strictly baptismal names here. We have very slight grounds for being sure that the custom of

John also in the Acts of the Apostles, the one called Mark whom Barnabas and Paul took with them and of whom it says again: "And they had John as their attendant."[1] But as to whether he is the writer, I should say no. For it is not written that he arrived in Asia with them, but "Paul and his company," it says, "set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John departed from them and returned to Jerusalem."[2] And I think there was yet another among those who were in Asia, since they say there were two tombs in Ephesus and each of them are said to be the tomb of John.[3]

Again, from the thoughts and from the actual words and their arrangement this John may be reasonably reckoned different from the other.[4] For the Gospel and the Epistle agree with each other and begin in a similar way. The one says "In the beginning was the Word:" and the other "That which was from the beginning." The one says "And the Word became flesh and tabernacled in us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the Only-begotten from the Father:" the other uses the same or almost equivalent expressions, "That which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands handled concerning the Word of Life, and the Life was manifested."[5] For he starts in this way

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connecting the giving of a name at baptism was universal as early as this.

[1] See Acts xii. 25 and xiii. 5. [2] *Ibid.*, xiii. 13.

[3] This assertion is taken almost verbatim from Eus., *H. E.* iii. 39, where a passage is also quoted from Papias in which John the Elder is mentioned as well as John the Apostle among the Lord's disciples.

[4] This is the second argument which Dionysius adduces, but he seems as if he now includes the third with it. See above.

[5] John i. 1, and 1 John i. 1, 2.

because he is dealing, as he shows in what follows, with those who say that the Lord has not come in the flesh.[1] For which reason he is careful to add also: "And we have seen and bear witness and announce unto you the eternal Life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us. That which we have seen and heard we announce also unto you."[2] He is consistent with himself and does not diverge from his own propositions, but treats them throughout under the same heads and in the same terms. Certain of which we will briefly recall; for instance, the attentive reader will find in each book frequent mention of the Life, the Light, the turning from darkness,[3] constant reference to the Truth, Grace, Joy, the Flesh and the Blood of the Lord, the Judgment, the Forgiveness of sins, the Love of God towards us, the command to us to love one another and that we must keep all the commandments: again there is the conviction of the world, of the devil, of the antichrist, God's adoption of us as Sons, the Faith, which is everywhere required of us, the Father and the Son everywhere: and generally throughout in describing the character of the Gospel and the Epistle one and the same complexion is to be observed in both. But the Revelation is quite different from them, foreign, out of touch and affinity with them, not having, one might almost say, one syllable in common. The Epistle contains no reminiscence nor subject dealt with in the Revelation

[1] Cf. 1 John iv. 2. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 2, 3.

[3] It looks as if this phrase may be a marginal gloss on the Light, which has crept into the text, as it occurs nowhere in the writings of St. John nor elsewhere in the New Testament; but the same might be said of the "adoption" below, and one or two others of the other phrases are quite rare in St. John's writings, so that they may be all instances of the thoughts, not the words being identical in the two books.

nor the Revelation in the Epistle (to say nothing of the Gospel), whereas Paul in his Epistles did give some indication even about those revelations which he has not actually described.[1]

And yet once more one can estimate the difference between the Gospel and Epistle and the Revelation[2] from the literary style. For the first two books are not only written in irreproachable Greek, but are also most elegant in their phrases, reasonings and arrangements of expression. No trace can be found in them of barbarous words, faulty construction or peculiarities in general. For St. John seems to have possessed both words, the Lord having graciously vouchsafed them to him; viz. both the word and knowledge of the word of speech.[3] That this John had seen a Revelation and received knowledge and the gift of prophecy,[4] I do not deny, but I observe his dialect and inaccurate Greek style, which employs barbaric idioms and sometimes even faulty constructions, which it is not now necessary to expose. For I have not mentioned this in order to scoff, let no one think so, but simply to point out the dissimilarity of the writings.

"On Nature"

(Eus., *Præp. Evang.* xiv. 23–7)

(1) How shall we bear with them when they say that the wise and, for that reason, the good

[1] The reference is to such passages as 2 Cor. xii. 1 ff. Gal. i. 12, ii. 2, etc.

[2] This is the third argument.

[3] A rather forced and fanciful statement. Dionysius appears loosely to refer to 1 Cor. xii. 8, somewhat boldly substituting "of speech" (τῆς φράσεως) for St. Paul's "of wisdom."

[4] Cf. 1 Cor. xiv. 6 and 8.

productions of Creation are the results of chance coincidences?[1] Each of which as it came into being by itself appeared to Him that ordered it to be good and all of them together equally so.

For God "saw," it says, "all things that he had made, and behold they were very good."[2] And yet they take no warning from the small, ordinary instances at their feet, from which they may learn[3] that no necessary and profitable work is produced without design or haphazard, but is adapted to its proper purpose by handiwork, whereas when it falls into a useless and unprofitable state, it then breaks up and comes to pieces indefinite, and, as it chances, because the wisdom which was concerned in its construction no longer superintends and directs it. For a garment is not woven by the woof standing up without a weaver, nor yet by the warp weaving itself of its own accord: but when it is becoming worn out, the torn rags fall asunder. And a house or a city is built not by receiving certain stones which volunteer for the foundations and others which jump into the courses of the walls, but because the builder brings the stones that fit in the proper order: but when the building is thrown down, each stone falls to the ground just as it may. So, too, when a ship is being built, the keel does not set itself below, while the mast raises itself in the middle and each of the other timbers takes the place which it chances to of itself.

[1] *i. e.* the results not of design but of the fortuitous intersection of lines of causation.

[2] Gen. i. 31.

[3] The argument appears to be that, as on a small scale design is "evident in the construction or repairing of a thing but is absent in its decay," so the orderly creation and maintenance of the Universe on the large scale implies intelligent direction.

Nor, again, do the planks of a wagon—said to be 100 [1] in number—become fixed in the position which each found empty; but the builder in each case puts the timber together suitably. But if the ship, when it went upon the sea, or the wagon, when it was driven along on land, comes to pieces, the timbers are scattered wherever it may happen—in the one case by the waves, in the other by the violent rush.

In the same way it would befit them to say that the atoms also which are inoperative when they are at rest and not worked by hands, are also useless when they move at random.[2] For let these opponents of ours look to these viewless atoms of theirs and apply their minds to these mindless ones, not like the Psalmist who confesses that this was revealed to him by God alone: "Mine eyes beheld thy unfinished work." [3] So, too, when they say that those fine webs which they speak of as being produced from atoms, are self-wrought by them without skill or sensation, who can bear to hear of these weaver atoms whom even the spider excels in skill when he spins his web out of himself.[4]

(2) Who, then, is it that discriminates between the atoms, gathering or scattering them, and arranging some in this way to make the sun and others in

[1] Hesiod (*Works and Days*, 554) is meant, but of course 100 stands here, as elsewhere, for an indefinitely large number.

[2] The point is that movement which is useful suggests design: but as the movement of the atoms is without design, it cannot be useful.

[3] Ps. cxxxviii. (cxxxix.) 16. Dionysius quotes the best text here of LXX, but his application is rather obscure. Apparently he means that the Epicureans claimed to know without either revelation or research what the Psalmist knew only by revelation from God.

[4] Dionysius says that even the spider has more notion of design than the atoms, but the sarcasm is not quite to the point.

that way for the moon, and putting each of them together according to the light-giving power of each star? For the particular number and kind that made the sun by being united in a particular way would never have condescended to produce the moon, nor would the intertwinings of the moon atoms have ever become the sun. Moreover, even Arcturus, bright as he is, would never plume himself on having the atoms of Lucifer, nor the Pleiads those of Orion. For Paul has well distinguished when he says: "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for star differeth from star in glory." [1] And if the combination of the atoms, as being soulless, was unintelligent, they needed an intelligent artist to put them together: and if their junction was without purpose and the result of necessity, they being void of reason, some wise herdsman drove them together and presided over them: and if they have been linked together voluntarily to do willing service, some wonderful master-craftsman assigned them their parts and took the lead; or, like an expert general, he did not leave his army disordered and all in a muddle, but disposed the cavalry in one part and the heavy armed troops apart, and the javelin men by themselves and the slingers where they ought to be, in order that those who carried the same weapon might help one another. And if they think this illustration ridiculous because in it I make a comparison of great bodies with small, we will come down to the very smallest.

[Eusebius's extract breaks off here.]

(3) If the atoms have no ruler over them, to speak

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 41.

to them or to choose or to arrange them, but they move, settling themselves of their own accord out of the big rushing tumult and producing a big uproar as they clash together, like coming to like without the Divine intervention of which the poet speaks,[1] and if they run and herd together, recognizing their kinsfolk, truly the republic of the atoms is a marvellous one, friends greeting and embracing one another and hasting to take up their abode in one habitation: some have rounded themselves off spontaneously into the sun, that mighty orb, that they may produce the day, and some perchance have flared up into the many pyramids[2] of stars that they may encircle the whole expanse of sky, while others are ranged around it, in order that they may—albeit undesignedly—form the firmament[3] and arch the atmosphere over for the graduated ascent of the stars, and that the confederation of these helter-skelter atoms may choose their abodes and apportion the sky as homes and stations for themselves.

(4) So far are these deniers of Divine Providence from comprehending the invisible parts of the universe that they do not even see what is visible. For they appear not even to consider the ordered risings and settings of the sun, conspicuous though they be, let alone those of the other heavenly bodies; nor

[1] "God ever brings like to like."—Homer, *Od.* xvii. 218, a proverb quoted both by Plato and Aristotle.

[2] Dionysius is probably thinking of Plato's *Timæus* 56B, where the pyramid is said to be the geometrical shape of fire which is the principal constituent of the bodies of the stars (Professor H. Jackson).

[3] Dionysius is here referring to such a passage as Gen. i. 6 ff. No doubt the ancients thought the vault of heaven was solid, enclosing the atmosphere which covers the earth, and that the stars were either fixed upon it or moved in their courses on its surface.

yet to appreciate the assistance thus given to mankind through them, the day being lighted up for work and the night being darkened for rest. For man shall go forth, it says, to his work and his labour until the evening.[1] But they do not even take note of its other [2] revolution, by which it brings about the fixed times and fair seasons and the regular winter and summer solstices, under guidance of its component atoms. Yet however much these poor creatures dislike it, it is as the righteous [3] believe: Great is the Lord that made him: and at His word he hasteneth his course.[4] Do atoms, ye blind, bring you winter and rains, in order that the earth may produce food for you and all the animals upon it? do they introduce summer that ye may receive for your enjoyment the fruits of the trees also? then why do you not bow down and sacrifice to the atoms that are the guardians of earth's fruits? ungrateful truly ye are, never offering them the smallest firstfruits of the many gifts ye have from them.

(5) The many-tribed and much-mixed populace of the stars which the much-roving and ever-scattered atoms composed have (they say) apportioned among themselves their places according to agreement, setting up, as it were, a colony or a community,[5]

[1] Ps. civ. 23.

[2] *i. e.* the sun's yearly (as opposed to its daily) course.

[3] "The righteous" here is a very unusual equivalent for "the Christians": it is possible, however, that the translation is: "however much these men disagree, being but poor creatures, though righteous enough in their own estimate."

[4] Ecclus. xliii. 5.

[5] The idea is of some stars being solitary, like a Greek or Roman colony (ἀποικία) with a constitution of its own, and of others grouping themselves into constellations or communities (συνοικία). The colony had a founder (οἰκιστής), the community or household would have some sort of controller (οἰκοδεσπότης).

without any founder or controller taking the lead over them: and they observe the duties of *neighbourliness* to one another by compact and peacably, not transgressing the original bounds which they accepted, as if they were under the jurisdiction of such atoms as had regal power. But the atoms do not rule; how could they, being of no account? Nay, listen to the Divine announcement (λόγια): "In the judgment of the Lord are his works from the beginning; and from the making of them he disposed the parts thereof. He garnished his works for ever and the beginnings of them unto their generation." [1]

(6) What well-ordered phalanx ever traversed an earthly plain, no one stepping in front of others, nor falling out of the ranks, nor obstructing his comrades, nor falling behind them, in the way that the stars advance ever in regular order, shield locked in shield —that continuous, unwavering, unencumbered and unembarrassed host? Yet certain obscure deviations (we are told) arise among them through clashings and sideward motions: [2] and that they who devote themselves to their study can always tell the seasons and foresee the positions at which they will rise. Let, then, these cutters [3] of the uncuttable and dividers of the indivisible and combiners of the uncombined and discerners of the infinite tell us by what means occurs the encompassing journey round the heavens in company? it cannot be because a single combina-

[1] Ecclus. xvi. 26 f.

[2] The natural motion of atoms was downwards, but there was also a slight sideward motion, and when they impinged a motion upwards by blows and tossings, and this produced the shape of things. But Dionysius here says, how is that theory consistent with the orderly march of the stars?

[3] Dionysius here plays on the derivation of ἄτομοι, from τέμνειν (= to cut).

tion of atoms has been without purpose hurled as from a sling in this way, seeing that the whole encircling band goes on its regular rhythmic way and whirls around together; by what means those multitudinous fellow-voyagers proceed in company albeit they are without arrangement or purpose and unknown to one another? Well did the prophet include amongst things impossible and undemonstrable that two strangers should run in company: Shall two walk at all together, he says, unless they are acquainted? [1]

(7) (That to work is not toilsome to God.)

To work and to administer and to benefit and to provide and the like are perchance vexatious to the idle and thoughtless and feeble and iniquitous, amongst whom Epicurus enrolled himself, when he conceived such ideas about the gods. But to the earnest and capable and intelligent and sober-minded, such as those who love wisdom (or philosophers) ought to be (and how much more the gods?), they are not only not unpleasing and irksome but rather most delightful and of all things most agreeable; for negligence and delay in doing something useful is a reproach to them, as the poet [2] warns them,[3] when he counsels: "Put not off till the morrow," and further threatens them: "He that procrastinates hath ever to struggle against disasters," while the prophet [4] instructs us still more solemnly when he says that virtuous deeds are truly godlike, but he that despises them is

[1] Amos iii. 3 (LXX). The A.V. and R.V. give the more exact meaning "agreed" to the last word.
[2] Hesiod, *Works and Days*, iv. 408 and 411.
[3] Viz. the heathen, to whom the poets were to some extent what the prophets are to us Christians.
[4] Jer. xlviii. 10.

detestable: "for," saith he, "cursed be he that doeth the works of the Lord negligently." Consequently, while those who are untaught in any craft and are imperfect from want of practice and familiarity with the processes do find toil involved in their endeavours, those who make progress in it, and still more those who have reached perfection, are cheered by their easy success in what they aim at, and would rather accomplish and bring to completion the tasks they are accustomed to than have all the good things of mankind. At all events, Democritus himself, so they say, used to maintain that he would rather discover a single reason for a fact than gain the Persian kingdom;[1] and that though he seeks his reasons so vainly and unreasonably, starting as it were from a void beginning and a roving hypothesis and not observing that fundamental Necessity[2] which is common to the nature of things existent, but considering his conception of senseless and mindless contingencies to be the highest wisdom of setting up Chance as the mistress and queen of things universal and even of things divine, and maintaining that all things occur through her, and yet warning her off from matters of human life and conduct and accusing those who give her precedence there to be devoid of judgment. At all events, at the beginning of the "Precepts,"[3] he says: "Men have fashioned the figure of Chance, as a cloke for their own folly: for by nature chance fights against judgement."

[1] The happiness of the King of Persia was proverbial: see Hor., *Od.* ii. 12, 21, iii. 9, 4.

[2] By "Necessity" here Dionysius means not "Fate" in the fatalist's sense, but that supreme Will and Purpose of God, which is opposed to the Epicurean doctrine of chance.

[3] The title here given (ὑποθῆκαι) is not given in the list of Democritus's works, but the ὑπομνήματα ἠθικά may be meant

Thus they (the Epicureans) have said that this very Chance, the great enemy of intelligence, yet has the mastery over it; or, rather, by utterly uprooting and abolishing the one, they set up the other in its place: for they sing not of intelligence as happy, but of chance as the equivalent of intelligence.[1] So, then, those who superintend works of beneficence pride themselves in measures which advance the interests of their kind, some as rearers of families, some as directors of institutions, some as healers of men's bodies, some as ministers of state, yes, and those who love wisdom (philosophers) and try hard to instruct their fellows, likewise give themselves great airs—unless Epicurus or Democritus will venture to maintain that philosophizing is mere vexation of spirit: but surely there is no pleasure they would prefer to it. For even though they reckon pleasure to be the absolute good, yet they will be ashamed to say that to philosophize (seek wisdom) is not one of the higher forms of pleasure.[2] And as to the gods, about whom the poets among them sing as "givers of good gifts"[3] and these philosophers combine respect with banter,—the gods neither give nor partake of any good things. And in what manner do they find evidence that

[1] It is impossible to reproduce the play upon words here, *εὐτυχῇ τὴν φρόνησιν, ἐμφρονεστάτην τὴν τύχην.* The reference seems to be to such poetical passages as Soph., *O. T.* 977 ff., and Eur., *Alc.* 785 ff., where the practical wisdom of leaving the future to take care of itself is extolled.

[2] Epicurus himself contended that by *ἡδονή* (pleasure) he meant not sensual enjoyments so much as freedom from pain of body and from disturbance of soul (*ἀταραξία*), the source of which was largely in the exercise of the mind and will: see Zeller, *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics*, pp. 473 ff.

[3] The words quoted (*δωτῆρας ἐάων*) are a Homeric phrase, e. g. *Od.* viii. 325 and 335.

gods exist? for they do not see them before their eyes doing anything (even as those who admired the sun and the moon and the stars said they were called gods (θεοί) because they run (θέειν) their course); nor do they attribute to them any creative or constructive powers, in order that they make them gods from the word θεῖναι (set, *i. e.* make): [1] and on that ground the Maker and Creator of all things is truly the only God; nor do they put forward their management or jurisdiction or favours towards men, in order that we may be induced to worship them from motives of fear or reverence.

"Refutation and Defence"

(Eus., *Præp. Evang.* vii. 19)

(1) They are not pious, who hand over matter to God as a thing without beginning for His orderly disposition,[2] maintaining that, being subject to treatment and change, it yields to the modifications imposed by God. For they should explain how both the like and the unlike belong both to God and to matter. For some one must be imagined superior to either,[3] and that may not be entertained about God. For whence came it that there is in them both

[1] The derivation from θέειν is proposed by Plato, *Cratyl.* 397 C: that from θεῖναι by Herod. ii. 52, and of the two the latter is the more likely (√θε), though Curtius suggests a root θες = to pray: see Peile, *Introd. to Philology*, p. 37 (3rd ed., 1875).

[2] These are probably some sort of Gnostics who took over Manichean views of God and Matter, but not of the worst kind, for they recognized that God had the control and disposition of matter.

[3] Some one, *i. e.* who could give them the property of being without beginning.

the being without beginning, which is what is said to be "like" in both and which is also conceived of as different from both?[1] For if God is of Himself without beginning and the being without beginning is, as some would say, His very essence, matter will not be without beginning, too: for matter and God are not identical. But, if each is what it is independently, and to both belongs in addition the property of being without beginning, it is clear that the being without beginning is different from either and older and higher than both. And thus the difference between their opposing states is entirely subversive of their co-existence, or rather of the one, viz. matter existing of itself. Otherwise let them state the reason why, both being without beginning, God is not subject to treatment, unchangeable, immovable, productive, and matter is the opposite, subject to treatment, changeable, mobile, varying.

Again, how is it that God and matter came in contact and combined? Was it that God adapted Himself to match the nature of matter and exercised His craft upon it? Nay, that is absurd that God, like men, should work in gold and stone and busy Himself in the other handicrafts which the various materials can give shape and form to.[2]

But if God endowed matter with the qualities which He in His own wisdom determined, impressing

[1] "Different from both," because the being without beginning is not of the very essence of both. See further on.

[2] A curious expression, for which one would have expected the opposite statement, viz. that the handicrafts can shape and form the materials they deal with rather than that the materials give the necessary methods and designs to the handicrafts which deal with them. Up to this point Dionysius has been combating the view with which the extract begins. The rest of the extract proceeds to show what amount of truth there is in it.

on it as with a seal the multiform and diverse shape and fashion of His own workmanship, this account of it is both proper and true, and yet further proves that God, who is the fundamental principle on which the universe exists, is without beginning. For to its being (according to them) without beginning God add its bearing certain qualities. So, then, there is still much to be said in answer to these views, but we do not propose to say it now. Nevertheless they are expressed with more propriety than those who are absolutely atheistical polytheists.[1]

(2) (Athan., *de sent. Dion.*, 18). However, when I spoke of certain things that had an origin (γενητά) and certain things that were made (ποιητά), I did indeed casually mention examples of such things, recognizing that they were not altogether useful for my purpose: for instance, I said that neither was the plant the same as the husbandman, nor the boat as the shipwright. But afterwards I dwelt at length on those which were more to the point and cognate to the subject, and went more into detail about these truer examples, seeking out various additional evidences which I set out for you[2] also in another letter: and in them I refuted as false the accusation also which they bring against me, as not stating that Christ is of one substance (ὁμοούσιος)[3] with

[1] The reference here is to Manichean views of the worst kind, *i. e.* that matter is not only without beginning, but the source of evil and altogether independent of God.

[2] *i. e.* Dionysius of Rome, to whom this treatise was addressed. This particular "other letter" does not seem to have been known to Eusebius, and when Athanasius quotes this extract in another of his treatises he omits the words "to thee."

[3] Athanasius himself was sparing in his use of the term, and the Synod of Antioch (A.D. 264) refused to accept it, as liable to misconstruction.

the Father. For even if I say [1] that this word is not found nor read anywhere in Holy Writ, yet these later attempts of mine to explain which they have ignored are not inconsistent with this conception. For I compared human generation, which is clearly a transmission of the parents' own nature (ὁμογενής), saying that the parents were different from their children in this single point, that they were not themselves the children: or else it must needs be that neither parents nor children should exist. The letter itself I cannot, as I have said before, owing to circumstances,[2] lay my hand on: otherwise I would have sent you my exact words, or rather a copy of the whole letter: and I will do so, if I have the opportunity. But I know from memory that I added several illustrations from things kindred to one another: for instance, I said that a plant coming up from a seed or a root was different from that whence it sprang and yet was absolutely of one nature (ὁμοφυές) with it: and a river flowing from a source partakes of a different shape and name; for neither is the source called river nor the river source, and both these things exist,[3] and the source is, in a sense, the father and the river is the water from the source. But these and similar remarks they pretend never to have seen written, but act as if they were blind. They only try to pelt me from afar [4] with those poor ill-fitting phrases of mine [5]

[1] *i. e.* in the letter to Euphranor (about Sabellianism in Libya) which had given rise to the Bishop of Rome's intervention.

[2] It looks as if Dionysius was in exile when he wrote this. See above, p. 19.

[3] *i. e.* each of the two is itself and not the other, as was said above in the case of parents and children.

[4] *i. e.* they had gone or sent to Rome, in order to attack him.

[5] Viz. about the plant and the ship, which he has already apologized for as not quite appropriate.

as with stones, failing to recognize that where a subject is obscure and requires to be brought within our understanding, not only do diverse but even quite contradictory illustrations convey the meaning sought for.

(3) (*Ibid.*, 23). It has been already said that God is the Fountain of all good things: and the Son is described [1] as the stream flowing forth from Him. For the Word is "the effluence" of mind, and, to use human phraseology, is conveyed from the heart through the mouth, *i. e.* the mind that finds expression by means of the tongue, being differentiated from the word in the heart. For the one having sent it forth remains and is still what it was; but the other being sent forth issues and is carried in all directions: and thus each is in each, being different one from the other: and they are one, being two. And it was in this way that the Father and the Son also were said to be one and in one another.[2]

Each of the titles employed by me is indivisible and inseparable from its neighbour. I spoke of the Father, and before introducing the Son I implied Him, too, in the Father. I introduced the Son: even if I had not already mentioned the Father He would, of course, have been presupposed in the Son. I added the Holy Spirit: but at the same time I intimated both from Whom and through Whom [3]

[1] *i. e.* in Scripture, *e. g.* in such passage as Wisd. vii. 25, to which he refers in the next sentence.

[2] Sc. in Dionysius's letter to Euphranor: cf. John x. 30, xvii. 11, 21, 22. The extract on p. 106 below deals with the same thought more fully. In both places Dionysius's language is based on Philo's discussion of the λόγος ἐνδιάθετος and the λόγος προφορικός (the conceived and the expressed word), *de vita Mosis*, p. 230, Cohn.

[3] i. e. *from* the Father and *through* the Son: Dionysius seems to have derived this view of the Holy Spirit's Proces-

He came. But they are not aware that the Father is not separated from the Son *qua* Father—for the title (Father) is suggestive of such connexion (as Son with Father)—nor is the Son cut off from the Father; for the appellation "Father" denotes their common bond. And the Spirit is the object of their dealings,[1] being incapable of desertion by either Him that sends, or Him that conveys. How then can I, who use these titles, hold that They are wholly divided and separated?[2]

(4) (*Ibid.*, 23). For, as our mind overflows with speech[3] of itself, as says the prophet: "My heart overfloweth with good speech,"[4] and each is diverse from the other, each occupying its proper place distinct from the other, the one dwelling and moving in the heart and the other on the tongue and in the mouth, and yet they are not entirely unconnected nor deprived of one another; the mind is not speechless, nor the speech mindless, but the mind produces the speech, revealing itself thereby; and the speech shows the mind, having been gendered therein; the

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sion from his master, Origen, though he is thinking here rather of the Mission of the Spirit into the Church and its members than of the eternal and necessary relations of the three Persons in the Holy Trinity to one another, as the sentences that follow indicate.

[1] *Lit.* in their hands: a striking expression which Athanasius borrows from Dionysius in his *Exposition of the Faith.*

[2] This is what Dionysius of Rome had imputed to our Dionysius, though without the word "wholly" he would not have altogether discarded the position.

[3] Λόγος is translated throughout this passage by "speech" (*i. e.* uttered words), except in the last clause, where it refers to the Son Himself and where it must be rendered by "Word" as usual: but obviously "speech" is only part of the full meaning of λόγος. The whole passage should be compared with the preceding extract.

[4] Ps. xliv. (xlv.) 1: here R.V. translates λόγον ἀγαθόν, "a goodly matter," in accordance with A.V.

mind is, as it were, the inlying speech and the speech is the issuing mind; the mind is transferred into the speech and the speech displays[1] the mind to the hearers; and thus the mind through the speech gains a lodgment in the souls of those that hear, entering together with the speech, and the mind is, as it were, the father of the speech, having an independent existence withal; and the speech is, as it were, the son of the mind, being an impossibility prior to the mind, yet brought into association with it from any outside source, but springing from the mind; even so the Father, who is the Almighty and Universal Mind, has the Son, the Word as the Interpreter and Messenger of Himself.

[1] The word used (ἐγκυκλεῖν) suggests the scenic device of the ἐγκύκλημα, by which some kind of change of scene was brought on to the stage in the Greek theatre: see *Classical Dict.*, s.v.

Additional Note to p. 12.

Jerome (in his letter *ad Evangelum*) is responsible for the assertion that Dionysius was the last who, in accordance with the original custom of the Church of Alexandria, was nominated as Bishop by his fellow-presbyters there. Subsequently the Bishop was chosen (at least in theory) by the whole body of the faithful in the diocese, as in other parts of Christendom. Jerome's words do not seem to include consecration also by a fresh laying of hands by the presbytery, though Bishop Lightfoot (*Philippians*, p. 231) inferred from certain other evidence of a not very decisive kind that this was the case and that it was rendered necessary at first by the Bishop of Alexandria having had no other Bishops with him in Egypt until 190. Others hold that no fresh laying on of hands at all had been considered necessary, which is hardly probable. Mr. C. H. Turner (*Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. i.) has suggested that Jerome was misled by Arians who had their own interests to serve in making the assertion, while he himself was too ready to credit it in his zeal to uphold the presbyterate against the arrogant claims of the Roman deacons at that time. The present writer ventures to think that Jerome's statement, if correct, refers only to nomination and that an episcopal consecrator had been found elsewhere (*e. g.* in Africa or Palestine or Syria) for the laying on of hands as usual.

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